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SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

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The SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) is a non-profit 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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NOTICES, ARTICLES and Other Neat Things

REMINDER: NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS

Please take notice that under the Bylaws of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. nominations for officers will be taken at the December general meeting to be held on Sunday, December 12, 1999 at 1:30pm with the election of officers to be held at the January general meeting. The following offices will be open for nominations:

1) President
2) Vice President
3) Secretary
4) Treasurer
5) Such Members at large up to a maximum of two (2) as shall be determined by the Board of Directors before the December general meeting.

SEMCO MEETINGS Sunday, December 12, 1999

Board Meeting	**12:00pm**
General Meeting	**1:30pm**
SIGS IBM/MAC Mtgs	**2:30pm**
Social Period	**3:15pm**
SIG-IBM Novice	**3:45pm**
SIG-IBM Intermediate	**3:45pm**

PLEASE NOTE

At the December meeting,
we are doing an expanded
general meeting,
not only for
Nomination of Officers,
but
to address such issues
as SEMCO and its future,
and
the fact that 3 out of 4
of the officers
are not running again.

It will take about an hour,
so SIGs IBM and MAC
will be starting around 2:30.

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NOTICE OF ELECTION

The annual election of officers of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. will be held during the January general meeting of SEMCO.

The January general meeting will be held Sunday, January 9, 2000 commencing at 1:30pm Room 164 Science Building Oakland University Rochester Michigan

DEALS COLUMN

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

I talked about Intel's 810 chipset a couple months ago? There's more. I heard that in an 810 hardware-support forum on Intel's Web site, an Intel engineer said: "The RTC (Real Time Clock) may inaccurately report that the clock is not busy when it is actually in the process of updating internal registers. This may result in invalid data being read in the date and time fields of the RTC, but the erratum does not modify the actual RTC values." It wouldn't hurt to look for a software work-around if you have that chipset.

Intel's new 820 (Camino) chipsets are also controversial at this point. With the introduction of Direct Rambus in three different speeds, 600/700/800 MHz, the 820 will be in two different formats. One supports all three speeds while the other supports only two. They support PC100 SDRAM, but not the more popular PC133 SDRAM, which amounts to a clock-speed mismatch.

Intel is using a new technology called the "Memory Translator Hub" to connect if you are using PC100 SDRAM. What a saga! If I were you, I'd check the net for more information if you are looking into motherboards, or check with knowledgeable people in your user group. There is much more but I'll let you check all that out. Last I heard Intel had the 820 chipset on indefinite hold which leaves many OEM people frustrated.

Still Good

Stuffit etc. Code # UGDEAL 999. Good through November 30th (maybe longer). Call 1-800-732-8881 to order (1-831-761-6200 in Canada) or e-mail them at <sales@aladdinsys.com>.

Web4Life internet service (only a one-time $149 setup fee), call 1-888-267-1122.

Y2K light humor book by Ingrid Harding - ordering information was inadvertently omitted last month. Single copies are just $3.98 (50% off) + $1.50 S&H US & Canada. Gift pack of 10, $30.00 - $4.00 S&H in US ($6.50 S&H to Canada). Order quantity for fundraisers and get a better discount. Order with check or money order to Porch Publishing, PO Box 158, Magnolia, NJ 08049, or w/ credit card, order at <www.ing2000.com/discount>. Otherwise leave info with voice mail at 609-792-3339 or fax 707-897-2593. This book is informative, but also humorous and easy reading. I enjoyed mine. My apologies to Ingrid, and to my readers, for that blunder. 40 lashes to myself and my proofreader.

Get Better At Windows 98

I've been browsing a new O'Reilly book called "Windows 98 in a Nutshell" and I like it. It contains 618 pages packed with information about using Windows 98. I had no problem understanding it all, nor the sequences to use its information. I took a cursory look, but I certainly learned a lot while browsing through it. Even several new keystrokes. It is an O'Reilly book written by Tim O'Reilly, Troy Mott & Walter Glenn.

The book is $24.95 retail US funds, but you get a 20% discount as user group members. Call 1-800-998-9938 and give the CS rep the code "DSUG" for your discount. They did not give me the shipping fees. Remember that

user group members always get a discount on all O'Reilly books.

Talk is Cheap

Thanks to Dennis Adamson, a member of my club, for alerting me to this one. Do you use phone cards? First time I used one, I was dismayed to find that my time started when I made initial contact to their access number. By the time I made contact with my wife, the voice said I had used seven minutes. The following was not meant to replace long distance service on the home phone, but to serve as an electronic phone card. Even so, a couple folks I know are using it at home with their speed dialers.

Take a look on the Web at <http://www.BigZoo.com> and see if you aren't impressed. They offer long distance service anywhere in the continental US for 3.9 cents per minute. You read correctly, 3.9 cents per minute. Even the service to other countries is priced right. Looking at the foreign country rates was very interesting.

There may be a 55-cent connection fee from a pay phone, according to their Web site, but that's not bad. I get charged 75 cents each time with my AT&T card, plus a monthly fee. I didn't see any monthly fees for using BigZoo. Check it out. You sign up on the Web and replenish your time using a Visa or Mastercard. You start with amounts as small as $10.00.

Home Automation? Anything You Want

I received a catalog called "Smarthome.com" and it seems to have just about everything to automate your home. Prices in this catalog are nothing special, but I liked the selection. I wouldn't have worried about passing this information on, but it even offers one of the best toys I ever bought. I have mentioned my automated drapery rod to others who also wanted to buy it after hearing about it, but it can only be bought through retailers, mostly overpriced catalogs. This is for those people. I tried in the past to get the Boss Company to give me a deal, but they were reluctant for fear of offending their retailers.

The "Boss" drapery rod control can be added to your existing drapery rod by cutting the cord and splicing in the chain provided. Mine lets me program up to six movements a day with stops wherever I want them. I didn't buy a remote, but one is also available. I have loved mine ever since the day I installed it. I bought mine at a CES show. The movement of your drapes each day makes it look like someone is home when you are away. The catalog price for the basic drape controller is $169.95. No "deal," but not that bad.

The phone number for the "Smarthome.com" catalog is 1-800-762-7846. Guess what their Web site is! If nothing else, you'll enjoy the catalog. It sure has a variety of products.

Sheet Music To MIDI File

Own sheet music you would like to hear without playing it? You need a scanner for this, but here is the description for this fascinating software: SharpEye Music Reader can convert a scanned image of printed sheet Music (a TIFF or BMP file) into a MIDI file. It incorporates a music editor that displays the converted image in standard music notation. You can also correct errors before saving

as a MIDI file. The music editor is linked to a display of the scanned image to facilitate the checking and correcting of the notes. It can deal with multiple staves per system, multiple voices per stave and recognizes most common musical symbols, including lyrics.

This fascinated me and I hope many of my musically inclined readers, so I have worked out a deal with Graham Jones, the developer. Go to the Web site <http://www.visiv.co.uk/dload.htm> for a better description and to download a 1.1 MB self-extracting fully working evaluation software.

If you like what it does, you can then contact BMT Micro at <https://secure.bmtmicro.com/ECommerceOnSite/48101.html> to purchase the registration key for $35.00 (normally $50.00). That URL was created just for this deal. Your registration key will be e-mailed back to you within 24 hours. You then enter the registration key into a box in the program's "help." Since the author is in Scotland, ordering is complicated because of foreign funds, but BMT Micro is a US organization for ordering. More information can be found at <http://www.visiv.co.uk>. If you desire it on a disk, call BMT Micro at 1-800-414-4268 to order, or if you have problems with this URL.

I have not tried this product myself as yet.

It's The Internet Calling

Here's a product to save money on your phone bill. Users get low-cost functionality and flexibility for phone calls over the Internet. ACS Innovations has introduced the new Ezfone Pro. With the $129.00 (SRP) Ezfone PC add-in card, individual and SOHO firms can use the Internet to call anywhere at only the cost of a local call.

The board allows you to forward calls to an alternate location and provides accessibility when you're away from the office. The Ezfone Internet Telephony product provides people with the mobile solution for international communications with just the local Internet connection charge.

My box contained two ISA adapter boards w/40 MIPS digital signal processing for audio compression (full duplex audio), two installation disks, two manuals and two phone cords, so both you and the remote party have everything needed. The manual has step-by-step instructions with pictures showing the PnP wizard. You will need dial-up networking, an ISP, Internet TCP/IP connection, 486 or better processor, a free ISA slot, touch-tone telephone, 14.4 Kbps or better modem and Windows 95/98 OS. Use either a touch-tone telephone or a microphone and speaker connected to the Ezfone card.

The called party should be connected to the Internet by previous arrangement. Otherwise, a short call must be made to set up the Ezfone call, or make initial contact. Imagine the savings, especially for International calling. Also works with others using Net Meeting or ICQ.

Discount to user group members is 20% off the $129.00 list. Please order 3-5 at a time with a single shipping address and single payment to avoid S&H. The order should be identified with the user group organization, and referencing the user group discount of 20%. Call CT & R Inc. at 1-408-566-0900 (fax 1-408-566-0909) and talk to

Michael Ho to order. Check their Web site <www.acscompro.com>. If you must order an individual piece, there is a $20 S&H.

Looks like I'm out of space, so meet me here again next month to discuss deals. This column is written to make user group members aware of special pricing and my comments should not be construed to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <dealsguy@mindspring.com>. √

LPWA: THE POWER TO SURF INVISIBLY

by Jerry Maizell
submitted by Betty MacKenzie

I have the power to cloud men's minds.

In radio days, devouring Lamont Cranston's adventures as the Shadow, I lusted after the secret mantle of invisibility. Little did I know that it would be the Internet that would make this ineffable power necessary, and that I would wrest it from the Internet itself. Neither new nor secret, this power bubbled up from the primal ooze in the ancient days of Internet time—1997. I will indoctrinate you into the cult.

The World Wide Web hosts an unwelcome spider: a potential for considerable compromise of your privacy. Many web sites want to know your name, age, snail-mail/e-mail address, interests, income, what other sites you visit. For starters.

You may not care if the Crummy Cookie Company or Wacky Web Bookstore collects such info from you for marketing purposes. But what if you visit sites that betray your interest in, for example, treatments for a particular disease? What if that information is collated so as to identify you, and passed on, purposely or inadvertently, to employers, insurance companies, governments or other snoops who might use it in ways you would rather they didn't?

Like the banker on the Maryland health commission who used state computers to match cancer patients to bank customers, and canceled their loans. (Time, Aug. 25, 1997)

Surfing generally reveals largely insignificant information about you: your ISP, the number assigned to you (which changes on every call), which browser and operating system you use. To get the goods on you, many web sites induce you to register in order to enter or fully utilize their pages. Registration information, if combined with the other details, may enable tracking of your web activities. Many sites place "cookies" on your drive, which are returned to the sites on future visits.

You needn't, of course, enter personal info if you don't wish to, and you can turn cookies off in your browser. But this may keep you from some interesting sites. The New York Times, for example, won't permit access unless you accept their cookie. Many vendors use cookies as the basis of their online purchase systems.

Perhaps the biggest Internet annoyance is junk e-mail, known as "spam." Software developers, Internet pundits and legislators struggle to discover methods of defeating spam. Lucent's Personalized Web Assistant can make you invisible to most would-be privacy invaders and subvert spammers who don't already have your address.

LPWA is free. You needn't download any software. It asks no questions beyond your real e-mail address and password. Merely edit your browser preferences with the simple instructions at <www.lpwa.com>, and login for each browsing session. Then for each new web site registration enter your username, password and e-mail address as a backslash followed by "u," "p" and "@" respectively. LPWA translates these into random letters/numbers, consistent for each login at each site, but different for different sites.

If a site e-mails you, LPWA forwards it to you anonymously.

Even if you care naught about anonymity, you'll save energy: you type only two keystrokes per login line, and you needn't remember passwords/usernames. Widely used, LPWA's target-revokable e-mail addresses could castrate spam. Combine LPWA with general anonymizers (<www.anonymizer.com>; <www.cyberarmy.com>) and you're all but invisible.

Don't surf naked. Cloak yourself in translucency.

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TECH MIS-QUOTES

submitted by Dennis MeLampy

• "You want to have consistent and uniform muscle development across all of your muscles? It can't be done. It's just a fact of life. You just have to accept inconsistent muscle development as an unalterable condition of weight training." —Response to Arthur Jones, who solved the "unsolvable" problem by inventing Nautilus.

• "Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy." —Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.

• "Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." — Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929.

• "Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value." —Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre.

• Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction." —Pierre Pachet, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse, 1872.

• "Everything that can be invented has been invented." —Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899.

Adventures in Postageland

by Phyllis Evans

My husband has a business that incurs huge postage bills, but a profit margin that really doesn't justify a postage metering system. Even the smallest Pitney-Bowes machine costs $25 a month, over and above actual postage costs.

New postage systems have started to appear, but most will print only to plain envelopes and require you to be connected to their Internet server in order to print. Additionally, you have to supply the mailing address to them so that they can verify the 9-digit zip code for printing. Call me paranoid, but I don't want someone having access to my mailing list.

Neopost, in partnership with Staples Office Supply Co., released their **Simply Postage** system earlier this year, but until recently it was Windows only. Their Mac version started shipping on November 1st. Simply Postage prints to labels, ships with its own meter/thermal printer and scale, and handles standard First Class, Priority and Express mailing. The standard cost is $17.95 a month, plus postage and a $5 charge each time you add postage to your meter. Because I ordered early, I was offered the service for $9.95 a month with a guarantee of no future price increases. The initial cost is $49.95, but includes your first $50.00 in postage.

The software is well designed and very Mac-friendly. System requirements include Power PC, 16 megs RAM, OS 8.0 or later, serial or USB port, and modem, cable modem, DSL connection, ISDN line or T-1 line. For once, we are ahead of the Windows platform. Theirs will only work with a regular modem and serial port. The meter and scale housings are clear and Bondi blue, with extra covers in the rest of the iMac flavors. The meter has a serial port on it, but comes bundled with a Bondi blue Entrega serial-to-USB converter. The scale will handle packages up to 4 pounds.

The fun started with the initial order. I had emailed for information twice, in July and again in September. As a result, two sales reps called in early October. I told the second one that I had already ordered it the day before. Several days later, another person called to get our address and billing info that the first person had been given, but somehow the "computer" couldn't find. Fine. On October 22, I received another call saying that the system would ship either the 21st or the 22nd. The next day, call #5 came asking for information for our USPS license from the Post Office. I admit that I was less than cordial, seeing as I had already given this information to callers 1, 2 and 3. Caller #5 and his supervisor both assured me that the system had shipped on the 21st. Wrong!

By the 27th, the package had not arrived, and with the repeated calls for information, I decided to check to be sure that it had been shipped to the right address. "Gee, sorry. There was a problem and it will ship on the 28th or the 29th." Yep! Sure! And the Pope is really a blonde stripper from Vegas. Want to buy a bridge? On November 2nd I called again and was told first that there was a software problem, then there were shipping problems and that while they hoped to ship that week, they were through making promises. Thank you! I informed them that I would definitely be reviewing their product and service for two large user groups. Two days later, the system showed up. Express mail, no less.

Connecting it was a snap, although I'm forced to use the serial connection with my A-B switchbox. It works beautifully with the Entrega serial-USB converter and the USB PCI card

that I installed in my 6500 last month, however the converter refuses to coexist with a StyleWriter 2500 connected to the printer port. I can print as long as I haven't accessed the postage meter. After I've launched the postage software, the Print command tries to funnel the print files to the postage meter instead of the StyleWriter. Don't know if this will happen with other serial-USB converters, but I intend to find out. While the switchbox does the trick, it would be nice to be able to use the USB card and not have to constantly switch back and forth.

I dutifully filled out the form required to download my first $50 in postage, faxed it back to the proper number, then proceeded to wait for confirmation that I could now start downloading and print some postage. By the next morning, not only had I not received word back, checking my account status on their website showed a $17.95 charge from the day before, with no further information. There was no data regarding what had been charged. My guess is that it was an automatic monthly charge, but it should only have been for $9.95 and the first month was to be free. Another call to customer service. The service rep I spoke with was stumped by the charge, as she couldn't access any invoice with the given number. We'll see what the credit card statement says! As to the missing postage, she wasn't sure what the problem was, but promised to find the answers and call me back. Seven hours later I was back on the phone.

This customer service rep couldn't understand why I was upset, as the mystery invoice didn't exist, even if it was showing on the website. I'm sure the attitude would be different if his credit card was the one involved. He finally put me on hold for 10 minutes, and I ended up back with the rep from the morning session. She said the mystery invoice did not exist and my postage would be available as soon as the other guy could get to it. As it was by now late Friday afternoon and they don't work on weekends, I asked if it would be today or would I have to wait until sometime next week. (I know, I know, I'm a bit**!) She put me back on hold and came back a couple of minutes later to say that it was a done deal and I could now access postage. She offered to talk me through the download, but I told her it would be rather difficult as there is only one phone line in my office. My husband who won't touch a computer has two phone lines in his office, but that's on the other side of the house.

I hung up, then dialed in to my ISP and tried to download, finally. Forget about it! A message box came up that said "An error occurred while purchasing postage. Failed to retrieve information from server." Oh, joy! Tried it again going through my backup ISP. Well, instead of calling Customer Service again, I decided to go straight to Tech Support. They had to be better, right? Wrong again. The only one who knew anything about Macs was on his dinner break. They promised FAITHFULLY to have him call back, ASAP. Here we go again! By closing time I still hadn't had a callback, so I emailed both Tech Support and the parent company, Neopost.

On Monday afternoon I received a call from one of the supervisors,

checking to make sure I had finally been able to download some postage. I gave her my version of the events. She said that they had upgraded the server software on Friday, and that was probably the reason I'd had problems. When I told her that I had received the same error message that morning, she was stumped and promised to find out what was going on and call me back within 30 minutes. Can you say "Empty promise?" I did get a call from tech support some six-and-a-half hours later, but I had gone out for a while. I returned the call and ended up with a voice mail system, but no humans and no return call by close of business.

After business hours on Monday, I emailed the Monday morning supervisor, indicating my frustration and dissatisfaction. As I mailed it, I received an email from someone in Tech Support saying that the server had been down for the weekend, so try it again. Replied with the usual been there, done that.

Late Tuesday afternoon I received a call from their one and only Mac expert, a very nice fellow by the name of Ernest. He was stumped, but was working with one of the programmers to see if they could figure out what was going on. Other Mac users were getting the same error message. After going over my setup and everything I had tried including the IP address of their web server, Ernest suggested that I try a third server address, a difference of one digit. It worked! We have postage!

The software is well designed. It looks like it was designed by Mac programmers and not just ported over from Windows. You can program the printer to produce a default stamp, so that you can print individual stamps at the press of a single button without accessing the software. Using the software, the scale will weigh your envelope or package and give you the proper postage for First Class, Priority or Express Mail. Enter the destination Zip Code and it will also print the proper bar code information. You can also tell it to print up to ten stamps at a time and date the stamps up to a week in advance.

Even after all the frustration and headaches, I really like the system. I've even volunteered to be a guinea pig for future software testing and troubleshooting. I hope the brass at Neopost appreciate Ernest. If he had displayed the same attitude as other Neopost employees, the system would have gone back. As it is, I have his direct phone number and extension and I will keep it handy.

Simply Postage is on the net at <http://www.simplypostage.com>. The software can be purchased from their web site and is also available at Staples and CompUSA. If you buy directly from the web site, the equipment will be shipped with the software. If you purchase it through a third party, the equipment will be shipped after you register on line.

Neoport: Sales and General, 1-877-397-8267 √

Simply Postage System

Steve Yuhasz, President, wearing one of our new stunning blue Vests purchased for helping out at vendor funtions
Photo by Warner Mach

STRAIGHT FORWARD! from the President

Steve Yuhasz

I must first start off this month to say how proud I was to be a part of SEMCO at the Microsoft eXtreme Event held on November 6 at the United Artists Theater in Farmington. Carol & Dawn Sanzi, Jean Blievernicht, Pat Kreiling, Mike Choly, Dick Gach, Keith Kossuth, Bert Farmilo and George Goetz all did a fantastic job of helping out not only Microsoft, but our group.

Everyone had blue vests and tunics that your board recently decided to purchase for our group. Treasurer Roger Gay was able to acquire these from a person to which he has given computer help in the past and also happens to be in the vest and tunic business. These items have our SEMCO Logo embroidered on them and look VERY sharp to say the least.

This was a great idea and it really showed at the event. I was able to say to the audience that the people in blue were volunteers from SEMCO giving of their time for free. With the large amounts of volunteers, these were highly visible and really showed the group our SEMCO pride.

We had a couple of eXtreme frights in the beginning of the setup period. I slipped and fell forward into a metal folding chair and bruised a rib due to a floor that was just mopped and had not been identified as such. Also, the theater announced to Stephanie Bice (our local Microsoft Rep) that the theater could only hold 338 people, but we had 507 people registered and 110 people wait-listed! However, strangely enough, only 302 people showed and we were saved from having to turn large amounts of registered attendees away. We initially were turning non-registered people away because we were worried about not being able to get the registered people inside.

All in all, it was a great event and we had two people from the eXtreme show attend this last SEMCO Sunday (that we know of) with hopefully more to come.

• • • • •

Well, depending on how you look at it, this could be my last President's column of the 20th Century, the decade, and the millennium, though it won't be my last president's column. However, I am still a believer that 2000 is the end of all of these because there was not a year 0. So, 1 was the first year and therefore 2001 is the beginning of the 21st Century, 3rd Millennium, and the new decade.

• • • • •

In any case, none of these issues should mark the end of SEMCO. And therefore, I am calling on all of you to run for a position on the SEMCO Board. One of you must at least run for President, Secretary, and Vice President. As you may recall from my last column, I announced that I will not seek the nomination for President at the general meeting this month. I chose to do this with much grief and sorrow, but I would rather do this now, rather than half way through 2000 have to miss meetings or resign due to the extra burden of going to school and juggling work.

Also, this is an opportunity for someone else to bring fresh ideas that may further enhance the direction of SEMCO. Do you remember the goals that I set forth in 1997? They are: Increasing membership by 100%, Becoming the Premier Internet Group in the Detroit Area, Helping the Community, and Achieving 501©(3) status. SEMCO has not achieved the first two goals. However, we have maintained our membership for the most part, or at least kept it from rapidly declining. We currently are at 160 and we have ranged from this to almost 190 when we merged with the Database Group.

On the subject of Internets, the Internet SIG blossomed in 1997 when it was held at Richard Jackson's House and then moved over to the Bloomfield Township Public Library in 1998 with Brian Brodsky taking it over as chair. However, we have not focused enough on the Internet during each of our Special Interest Groups. Just about every aspect of computing is being touched in some way by the presence of the Internet. The challenge

to the SIG's is to find out how to best take advantage of it and demonstrate its capabilities to our membership in a way that will enhance their lives.

The 501©(3) process has moved along nicely, but still has a way to go. With the gracious help of John Tatum, we will succeed in filing paperwork with the Federal Government within the next 12 months.

Perhaps the goal that we have achieved is helping the community. I must say, I have been extremely impressed with the way in which so many of our members have volunteered to donate a computer to SEMCO Member Art Laramie's Rochester Lions Club, donating equipment to the Immaculate Heart of Mary School with SEMCO Newsletter Editor Beth Fordyce, and Bob Clyne, Franz Briedenich, and myself helping Carol Sanzi and the teachers at Goodale Elementary in Detroit Public School System. If anything, this is perhaps the most important goal of SEMCO, that is, to help one another. If we do not achieve anything else, this one goal is enough to make anyone state that SEMCO is a great organization that deserves to be around another 24 years.

The fate of SEMCO is now in your hands. You must run for President, Vice President, or Secretary. If you do not, it will mean the end of a great organization. Let us not let one of these empty positions stop 24 years of progress in helping people with their computers in the SouthEastern Michigan Area. It may be yourself or your school or someone you know or do not even know yet that SEMCO may help in the future. Would you want to say that SEMCO did not exist because you would not run for office? Please, consider the consequences and run for office!

• • • • •

At our last General Meeting on December 12, 1999 at 1:30pm I will hold an extended general meeting to talk about the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, its 24-year past, its present, and its future as well as take nominations for President, Vice President and Secretary. If you are a SEMCO member that has not come to a meeting in a while and you care about seeing SEMCO continue as one of the oldest user groups in the world, won't you please join us and tell us what SEMCO has meant to you, your friends, and your community? I hope to see you there. We are all counting on you!

I must end 1999 by saying that while SEMCO has not achieved all of it goals and objectives, it has seen many computer tragedies unfold and be wiped away. I do not believe Y2K will be one of those. Truly, January 1, 2000 should just be another New Year's Day as will February, March, April, May, etc. each be just another month in a new year that happens to be written starting with that number. The sky won't turn green, your money won't turn to gold, the problems of the world will not all be solved, a giant number 2000 with not go running around neighborhoods chasing people down the street and life will go on. Whatever may be the case, we need to worry about the next few months, not centuries or 1000 years. None of us will be here in the year 3000. Hopefully, we will be somewhere better.

Remember our mission statement: To help the diverse Detroit Metropoli-

tan Community learn about personal computing and related technologies through an outgoing, exciting, and entertaining membership of people from the community at a charitable cost to its members.

I must say thanks to those generous and giving people who brought food at the November meeting. They were Pat Kreiling-Peanut Butter Buddies; Joan & Roland Maki-Cake; Leslie Turner-Cookies; Dawn Sanzi-Fudge; Carol Sanzi-Chips & Dip & Little Sausages; Betty MacKenzie-Cheezits, & Cookies; Sandra Woods-Punch. Brian Brodsky was heard saying that this was the best assortment of homemade food ever! I could not agree more!

In any case, I take this opportunity to wish all of you a most Blessed Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Happy Kwanza, a good Ramadon, and a Wonderful and Prosperous 2000. If you believe it is the new Millennium, Century, and Decade, I wish you a happy "all of those."

No matter what, keep looking Straight Forward in a Community Organization Helping People for the 21st Century! √

BOARD MEETING 11/14/99 Pat Kreiling

Present: President Steve Yuhasz, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Pat Kreiling, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, Co-Chairmen SIG-IBM Tom Callow and Warner Mach, SIG-MAC Chairman Harold Balmer, SIG-Internet Chairman Brian Brodsky, Publisher "Vic" Charnes.

President Steve Yuhasz called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

CORE BUSINESS

Treasury: Treasurer Roger Gay reported a balance on hand of $2447.69 with $200 not yet deposited. Roger requested approval for the payment of $50 for APCUG dues and $10.88 to reimburse Warner Mach for refreshment supplies. Payment was approved. The October membership total is 160.

There was some discussion regarding our APCUG membership and whether we should continue it. The issue was tabled until the December meeting.

The price for the new SEMCO vests was quoted at $100. Unfortunately, the manufacturer forgot to include the one-time $100 set up fee. We are not obligated to pay the extra $100. After some discussion Roger Gay moved that we send $150 as payment in full. The motion carried. Roger Gay will get the price list from the manufacturer so that individual members may order items with the SEMCO logo.

DATA BUS: The deadline for the newsletter this month is November 24. The price of publishing the newsletter is increasing considerably. There will be some investigation of ways to offset these increases. The notice of the December nominations will be in the upcoming DATA BUS.

SIG-IBM: The December meeting will begin late due to extending the general meeting for nominations. MGI Graphics will present the program.

SIG-Intermediate: Today's topic will be Databases 101.

SIG-Novice: Steve Yuhasz will lead today's group, December will be Harold Balmer, and January will be Franz Breidenich.

SIG-MAC: Today's will be a question and answer session, December's topic will be Conflict Catcher and January will be MIDI.
SIG-Advanced: This month's meeting had 9 people present.
SIG-Internet: Due to a scheduling problem the October meeting was canceled. This month's topic will be Metasearch Engines.
SIG-Database: This month's meeting will be held at Corrin Potvin Associates on November 17, 1999.
Internet Committee: The next committee meeting will be held in January. The two missing issues of the DATA BUS have been added to the site and the "INC" after SEMCO has been added where appropriate.

NEW BUSINESS

SEMCO Library Tour: Tom Callow was contacted by the Lake Orion Library. He is currently waiting for a follow-up phone call. He will be doing two presentations for the Oak Park Seniors on November 17 and 18.
501(c)(3) Effort: We are incorporated with the State of Michigan and must apply within 15 months for 501(c)(3) status. Steve Yuhasz will contact John Tatum regarding this issue.
Oakland University: There may be a monthly fee charged for using the projectors in the meeting rooms. This would substantially raise our operating costs. We will wait until the university makes a definite decision before deciding on a course of action.
Volunteer Vouchers: Roger Gay moved that we approve volunteer vouchers for the participants of the November 6 Microsoft eXtreme event. The motion carried.
"Vic" Charnes: "Vic" was recognized by the board for all of his efforts on our behalf, in his position of Publisher.
Holiday Party: The SEMCO holiday party for volunteers is tentatively scheduled for January 2, 2000 at Pat Kreiling's house.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06pm. √

GENERAL MEETING

by Dr. Wm. Agnew
Volunteer Scribe

President Steve Yuhasz opened the meeting at 1:30pm with 34 members present. The officers were all wearing the new blue SEMCO vests that were purchased for use at public events, to identify SEMCO members. Steve recognized the volunteers who helped at the Microsoft eXtreme Event and gave vouchers ($1 off membership dues or an extra raffle ticket) to the six who were present. He welcomed three visitors, who introduced themselves. Two had heard about SEMCO at the Microsoft eXtreme Event.

Steve announced that he, Pat Kreiling, current SEMCO secretary, & Tim Mauro-Vetter, current Vice Chairman, will not be candidates for the Board in the coming year because of other commitments, so there will be three openings on the Board in the next election.

Nominations are due in December and the election in January. Steve hoped that members would step forward and accept nominations for these positions in order to keep SEMCO alive.

There are now 160 members of SEMCO. Steve closed the meeting at 1:45pm. √

SIG-MAC
11/14/99
Harold Balmer

NEXT MAC MEETING:
DEC: Harold Balmer to demo Conflict Catcher.
JAN: Harold Balmer to demo MIDI. √

Castlewood Orb Update
by Phyllis Evans

Those with Castlewood ORB drives for Mac have patiently waited for the release of the promised tools application that was to have been bundled with it. In the last few weeks, Castlewood has release several versions of a limited tools application that only formats and mounts the disks. Unfortunately, it has been less than perfect, and in some cases caused damage. While the latest version seems to be alright, I can't quite trust it.

At the same time, Castlewood has licensed MacMedic to distribute a limited version of their MacMedic Tools that will work only with ORB drives. The MacMedic ORB Tools can repair, defrag, recover damaged files, do backups, and can format your ORB disks to HFS+ without data loss. The best part is that it is entirely free. All you have to do is register on their website with your ORB serial number. They will then send you a password to unlock the downloadable file. Yes, you do have to put up with a splash screen that touts the full version of MacMedic, but we can live with that.

If you have an ORB drive, check it out at <http://www.macpitstop.com>. You won't be sorry. √

PRAM BATTERY CHECKER
by Phyllis Evans

At the November meeting, a question was asked regarding how to tell if a backup battery was dying. I knew there was a small app that could check the condition of the battery, but couldn't remember the name of it. Well, I checked it out that night, then went to the web to see if there was a newer version. You can download PRAM Battery Checker (freeware) at <http://www.polar-orbit.com>. The installer will place it in your startup folder where it will check your battery each time you start up. If it detects a problem, you'll see a message about replacing the battery. √

SIG-INTERNET
11/15/99
Brian Brodsky

The meeting opened with a discussion of future meeting topics. It was decided that in December everybody would share with the rest of the group a few of their favorite websites. January's meeting topic would be Microsoft's Front Page. A question and answer session followed.

Then Brian Brodsky introduced the meeting topic meta-search engines by defining the term. A meta-search engine is a tool that queries multiple search engines and returns the results. Unfortunately, not all search engines work the same and meta-search engines do not always translate your queries properly. Most of the meta-search engines I looked at recommend using the +/- and quotes as opposed to

Boolean queries. Some try to translate the queries properly, but if it cannot it will drop the unrecognized items. This will produce the opposite of what you want in the case of NOT.

Here is a list of the urls that were used in the discussion: <http://www.metacrawler.com>, <http://www.profusion.com>, <http://www.mamma.com>, <http://www.savvysearch.com>, <http://www.dogpile.com>, <http://weblocator.hypermart.net>.

Some meta-search engines query all the search engines and remove duplicates. Others query the search engines one at a time, producing quicker results, but also return duplicates if more than one search engine returns the same site. The last site visited was a meta-meta-search engine that queried meta-search engines.

For December, the group will share their favorite websites, which will be held on the third Monday, December 20, 1999 at 6:30pm at the Bloomfield Twp Public Library. Contact Brian Brodsky, Res. 248/544-8987 (evenings) or work 248/395-0001 Ext. 228 for directions/info. √

SIG-DATABASE
11/17/99
Larry Grupido

Next meeting: Wednesday, Dec 15.

Meeting dates are on the third Wednesday: Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 15. Info: Larry Grupido, lgrupido@tir.com, or (810) 664-1777 ext 151. √

IBM & COMPATIBLES

SIG-IBM
11/14/99
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

NEXT MEETING TOPIC:
Question and Answer, and News. √

SIG-ADVANCED
11/1/99
Franz Breidenich

NEXT MEETING: December 6.
Meetings are held the first Monday at 6:45pm at the Troy Public Library. √

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
11/14/99
Tom Callow

NEXT MEETING TOPIC: Home Networking - Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate how to connect two computers at home into a network. √

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
11/14/99
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

NEXT MEETING: Q&A, member-directed discussion.
Host: December, Harold Balmer
January, Franz Breidenich √

DECEMBER DATA BUS DEADLINE (10th day after meeting)

SEMCO & SIG DATA, & MEMBERS' ADS - Deadline: Wed, Dec 22, 11:59pm
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

December 12 - 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:** Nomination of Officers and General Discussion. President Steve Yuhasz will conduct a discussion of SEMCO and its future (to be an expanded meeting).

SIG-IBM (for IBM & compatible users), About 2:30 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Question and Answer, and News.

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

NOVICE-IBM GROUP, 3:45 pm, **Room 172. Pgm:** Q&A, member-directed discussion. Hosts: December, Harold Balmer, January Franz Breidenich.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE, 3:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Home Networking - Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate how to connect two computers at home into a network.

SIG-MAC (All Apple Macintosh products), About 2:30 pm, **Room168. Pgm:** Harold Balmer to demo Conflict Catcher.

SIG-ADVANCED

Dec 6 - Monday, (Next: Jan 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

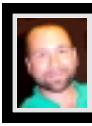
Dec 15 - Wednesday, (Next Jan 19) 6pm (Meet 3rd Wednesday) at Custom Business Systems offices (a subsidiary of Correll Porvin Associates, CPA). Info: Larry Grupido 810/664-1777 ext 151; lgrupido@traveladv.com.

SIG-INTERNET

Dec 20 - Monday, 6:30pm (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:** The group will share their favorite Websites.

SEMCO

Jan 9. 2000 - SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday).



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.)**
Dec 11 - 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),
~~Dec 25~~ - 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
Dec 10 - 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
~~Dec 30~~ - 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)
Dec 9 - Thursday, 6:30pm (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: lookinc.com/gdoug.

MacGroup Detroit
Dec 19 - 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: Macintosh in the Home: iMac DV, iMovie and More.

MacTechnics, (MAC user Group), Coffee 9am, SIGs 9:30am, Main meeting 11am.
Dec 18 - 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.

MCUG (Michigan Computer Users Grp)
Dec 16 - 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
Dec 9 - Thu 7pm (Meet 2nd Thu) MAC: Troy Library, I-75 at Big Beaver; Dec 15 - Wed 7pm (Meet 3rd Wed) IIGS, Apple II/Apple-Works, Parent/Teachers Ed, PC, Internet: St Bede School, 12 & Southfield; Dec 16 - Thu 7:30pm (Meet 3rd Thu) MAC Media Arts, Programmers: St. Bede. Info: Carl Pendracki 248/647-8871 or carlpen@aol.com. Web: miapple.cjb.net.

SHCC (Sterling Hts Computer Club)
Dec 7 - Tuesday, (Next: Jan 4) 7:30pm (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:**

SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.)
Dec 9 - Thursday, 6:39-9om (Meet 2nd Thursday); Saginaw. Info: Kay Engelhart program chairperson at kengelhart@hotmail.com.

Wayne State U. Mac User Grp
Dec 11 - 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 **TOPIC: Questions, Shortcuts, Tips and The Internet.**

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

● ● ● ● ● ●

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 computer science classes. Contact Beth 248-626-5105 7pm–10pm or beth_fordyce@macgroup.org You may also contact the church directly: Maurice Roberts or Sister Mary Stephanie Holub 313/835-0258

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.)

Your **SEMCO** membership card is good for a **$1 discount** (not valid with any other offer) on admission to **Super Computer Sales** shows. See **www.a1-supercomputersales.com** or **www.a1scs.com** for show schedule.

NOVEMBER REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator
Pat Kreiling
Betty MacKenzie
Joan/Roland Maki
Dawn Sanzi
Carol Sanzi
Leslie Turner
Sandra Woods
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. 9a-10p
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
Vetter, Tim—248/576-7592, anytime
Yuhasz, Steve—734/953-3794 eves

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

SEMCO MEETING - Sunday, December 12, 1999

SCIENCE BUILDING, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY in ROCHESTER

SEMCO Board Meeting at 12:00 pm, **Room172** - For Officers and Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Nomination of Officers and General Discussion. President Steve Yuhasz will conduct a discussion of SEMCO and its future and the fact that 3 out of 4 of the officers are not running again. **Please note** this will be an expanded general meeting, and SIGs IBM and MAC will begin about 2:30 pm.

SIG-IBM (for IBM & compatible users), About 2:30 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Question and Answer, and News.

SOCIAL PERIOD, 3:15 pm, **Room 172.** Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

NOVICE-IBM GROUP, 3:45 pm, **Room 172. Pgm:** Q&A, member-directed discussion. **Hosts:** December, Harold Balmer, January Franz Breidenich.

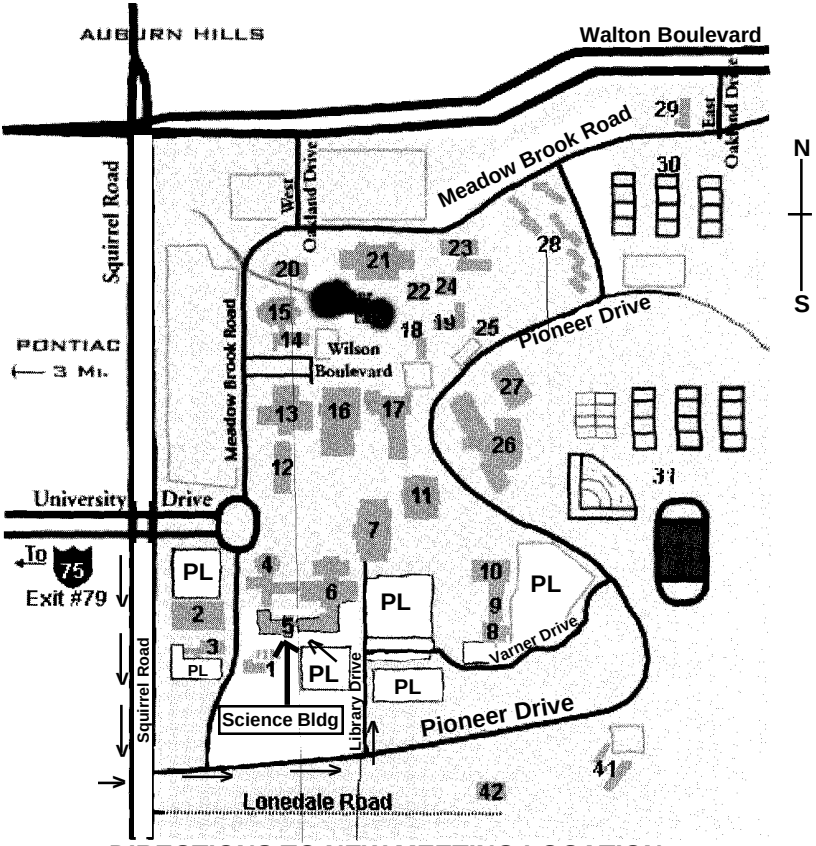
SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE, 3:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Home Networking - Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate how to connect two computers at home into a network.

SIG-MAC (All Apple Macintosh products), About 2:30 pm, **Room 168. Pgm:** Harold Balmer to demo Conflict Catcher. Also Copy Session.

PUBLIC INVITED

(Please copy this and the next page to post on your bulletin board)

MAIN CAMPUS of OAKLAND UNIVERSITY



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).

Member of
Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG

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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