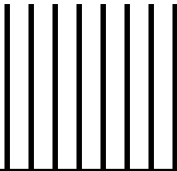# SEMCO

Official Newsletter

SouthEastern Michigan

Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

Volume 25   **APRIL 2000**   **Number 4**

IN THIS ISSUE

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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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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**Chuck Moery
Your SEMCO President**

I have had an interest in Hand Held and Palm type computers for a number of years and have a love/hate relationship with these little monsters.

The first unit I used was Apple's Newton. I was impressed with the handwriting capabilities that was demonstrated in a presentation prior to Newton's introduction. Unfortunately, after purchasing a unit, I found that the Newton had many features that were usable, but the handwriting just wasn't, and I subsequently discontinued its use in a matter of hours. Apple improved this feature in later models, but not to the extent that it was fully acceptable.

In many ways, the introduction of Apple Newton's handwriting technology was introduced ahead of its time, but we all know being first isn't always an insurance of success and introducing a technology that is not fully usable is initiating disaster.

I also have used a Hewlett Packard Model 200LX Hand Held for approximately four years and truly believe this unit possessed the qualities that I desired in a Hand Held above any other units I researched. One of the features that the 200LX model possesses is that DOS is implemented in ROM.

I still use DOS programs for many functions because it is easy to program and complies into a very compact format (as opposed to the multi-megabyte bug-ridden programs in some of the higher level programs). The only feature I didn't like about the 200LX was that data was displayed on the screen in black and white and made the readability difficult. The unit is still a very usable Hand Held and I still use it on a regular basis.

My most recent Hand Held is also a Hewlett Packard device. It is a model HP620LX and uses the CE operating system and has many improved functions compared to the 200LX. The feature I like best about the 620LX is its color display. I frankly find it more difficult to use my HP200LX because of its lack of a color screen. I have recently updated the ROM with the most recent CE (2.11) operating

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SEMCO MEETINGS
Sunday,
April 9, 2000

**Board Meeting   12:00pm
General Meeting   1:30pm
JOINT MEETING   1:45pm
for all members and SIGs:
Dawn Smith of the
Ink Connection
talking about refilling inkjet
printer cartridges
SIGS IBM/MAC Mtgs 2:45pm
Social Period   3:15pm
SIG-IBM Novice   3:45pm
SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45pm**

eXtreme Event
Saturday, April 8, 2000
1:00 to 3:00 PM
United Artist Theatre
30170 Grand River
Farmington Hills, MI

system and am quite pleased with the changes.

I dislike using a serial cable to synchronize various programs and normally copy any changes to the PC card and transfer the PC card to my desktop or notebook computer to update their systems. I also am disappointed that HP did not include DOS on this unit. (Note: I recently read an article which allows a third party to load DOS onto the unit and plan to install DOS onto my Hand Held.) I also would like to have Microsoft improve PowerPoint and Access with the same compatible format as the desktop operation system.

My son has used a Palm Pilot on a daily basis since its introduction and really likes its compactness and the number of programs available for the unit. He definitely wants a unit that will fit in his shirt pocket. I am also impressed with the Pilot, but am awaiting a color unit with memory card capabilities.

In my opinion, none of the Hand Held CE/Palm type devices have the full functionality as a notebook with a Win 95/98 operating system and until they obtain parity, their use will be limited. Perhaps in one or two more revisions this deficiency will be overcome and then we will not have to be burdened with heavier units to lug around. There are many indications that this may happen in a few months and if this materializes, look for sales to skyrocket.

If you have any suggestions (constructive criticisms or comments) on making SEMCO more efficient, please send me an email. My address is: <Keypounder@juno.com> √

JOINT MEETING
by Dr. Wm. Agnew
Volunteer Scribe

SEWING WITH A COMPUTER

The meeting began at 1:45pm when Tom Callow introduced Marilyn Sage (and her daughter, who helped with the presentation) to demonstrate her computer-controlled sewing machine.

Marilyn said that she used to do all kinds of spinning, weaving, knitting, and embroidery, but chronic tendonitis eventually made it impossible for her to do handwork. Therefore, she combined her interests in sewing and computers into her present avocation. She got her first computer-controlled sewing machine in 1990. Her present machine is a Viking Designer 1 model, which cost about $5000. An additional $2000 is needed for the software (these prices have recently increased).

Doing embroidery, Marilyn's machine beeps each time it needs a color change, and she then has to change the colored thread manually. She said she has 450 colors of thread in her cabinet at home. On professional (commercial) machines there may be as many as 8 or more needles that are loaded with different colored thread, so it automatically switches colors when needed. Those machines, however, even used, might cost as much as $16,000. The professional machines also need to be always connected to a computer, whereas her machine can do the programming separately and take it to the machine on floppy disks (10-20k for one design).

4

The software is used to digitize a design for embroidery, and then will be used to program the sewing machine. An assortment of designs come with the machine, but other designs can be purchased for $25 or so, or free designs can be downloaded from the Internet, or you can create your own designs. But some sewing machines will only accept designs supplied from the same company as the machine.

Marilyn demonstrated the software, which operates much like other graphics programs. She uses greyscale in digitizing the design, picks a small segment of the design and enlarges it, then outlines it with mouse clicks, picks a color, chooses the angle of the stitches and the density (distance between rows of stitches), and the type of stitch. She demonstrated with a design consisting of an apple, stem and leaves. The leaves were done with rows of stitches running vertically on one side of the leaf and horizontally on the other side, giving a three-dimensional effect. At a corner the stitches are made very close together to keep the corner sharp. Some designs take an hour or two to digitize.

Marilyn said the manual was not very helpful.

Another design Marilyn showed was a rabbit sitting on an Easter egg that she got from Corel clip art. This was the first one she ever tried without help. Still another example was a rabbit robot design of which she could make a mirror image, giving two robots facing each other. By changing the angle of the stitches for each segment a metallic effect was created. This design appeared embroidered on the backs of Marilyn's and her daughter's shirts when they turned around (under the design it said "Buns of Steel").

After demonstrating the software digitizing a design that combined a flower blossom with a stem, Marilyn started up her machine and embroidered the design. The machine takes a pattern that is 150 by 240 mm. A stabilizer (backing material) is used behind the fabric so that the embroidery doesn't bunch up the fabric, and the first thing the machine does is tack the outside edge of the fabric to the stabilizer. Then the design is stitched. Marilyn said there were 5546 stitches in the flower design, but the rabbit robots each had 75,000 stitches.

Marilyn passed around a number of embroidered samples with all kinds of designs that she had done. She mentioned that four Christmas wall hangings that she made for her relatives took a total of 48 hours just for the embroidery.

Although Marilyn's machine works with IBM, a special adapter allows the same software to work with a Macintosh. She said, if you want to buy a machine, you should be careful what dealer you work with because some provide good maintenance and others don't. She had a bad experience with one dealer who did not remove lint from a part of the machine that is inaccessible to the customer.

Marilyn offered to answer questions for anyone who wanted to contact her at her e-mail address: <msage@gfn.org>.

Bob Clyne offered the comment that Marilyn had kept us in stitches with her presentation. √

GENERAL MEETING
by Dr. Wm. Agnew
Volunteer Scribe

President Chuck Moery opened the meeting at 1:30pm with 36 people present. He welcomed one visitor who introduced herself to the group. He asked for volunteers to help with the Microsoft eXtreme Event on April 8, and passed around a sign-up sheet. A volunteer is still needed to organize and coordinate SEMCO's participation in this event. The eXtreme website can be viewed at <www.Microsoft.com/eXtreme>.

Bob Clyne described the CD that has been prepared for sale to SEMCO members and which contains all the articles from the DATA BUS from 1997 to 1999 as well as Adobe Acrobat Reader with search capability. It sells for $5. Last month's supply was completely sold out, but Bob was taking orders this month for newly produced CDs for delivery next month.

Jerry Comptois offered to give away some nearly new printer cartridges for Hewlett Packard printers—he found a recipient (a typical side benefit of attending SEMCO meetings).

Tom Callow conducted a raffle after the main program speaker, offering T-shirts (XL), a notepad, a copy of Turbo-Tax, and Microsoft Office 2000. He had trouble finding anyone who wanted Turbo-Tax at this late date.

It was announced that this was Tom Callow's birthday, all day, and although there was no special ceremony, the members, in their hearts, all wished him well and thanked him for his super contributions to SEMCO. √

NOTICES, ARTICLES and Other Neat Things

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

I'm having a disagreement with Best Buy and informing you of it to make you aware of things you "aren't" told in a sales pitch. In other words, read what they say they are giving you.

Several months ago I purchased a new laptop computer with an active matrix screen from Best Buy at a sale price. Because of previous bad experiences, I had said I would never buy from them again, but I thought this was a good buy and made the exception only to regret it. I also purchased the insurance after listening to the sales pitch and asking (not enough) questions. The salesman pointed out (among other things) that in the event it could not be repaired it would be replaced with a new one by the insurance.

Several months later it had to be sent in the second time for service and came back as unrepairable. When they offered the replacement, they would only give me a store credit up to the amount I originally paid. In order to get a new laptop with an active matrix screen (like the original had), I would have to pay an additional $400. I disagreed and was told by the store manager that this provision was written into the insurance agreement (which I hadn't previously read). I was not informed of that qualifying factor in the insurance contract by

6

their salesperson and it would seem that they sold me the insurance, then took it away with the fine print.

I have been to the Better Business Bureau with no further luck because of the contract wording (pointed out by the response from Best Buy's corporate management) and I am in the process of getting an attorney. I told the BBB that I thought Best Buy used deceptive sales practices, but the BBB sent me a list of other offices for further assistance. Friends tell me I won't win this one, but I never accept defeat automatically so I'll certainly go down swinging if I don't win. Obviously I'll write off Best Buy from now on. Don't believe any sales hype. Read it thoroughly to see if you get what you think you're paying for. Now for the deals.

Caere Still Takes Care Of User Groups

I'm sorry to say that this one got buried on me and I couldn't find it until now. I called Caere and it's still good. All user groups should have gotten this letter, but here it is again through me. You all know the products, so I'll just give the listings.
• OmniPage Pro 10.0 retail upgrade, Windows, reg. $99.95, UG price 69.95
• OmniPage Pro 8.0 retail upgrade, Mac, reg. $99.95, UG price $49.95
• Image AXS Professional, Win/Mac, reg. $199.95, UG price $99.95
• PageKeeper Pro 3.0, Windows, reg. $29.95, UG price $19.95
• OmniForm 4.0, Windows, reg. $149.95, UG price $79.95
• OmniPage Web 1.0, Windows, reg. $499.95, UG price $99.95
• OnmiPage Pro Scanner Suite, Windows, reg. $99.95, UG price $74.95

You must use their order form. Someone in your user group should have it, but if not, get it mailed to you by going to: <http://www.caere.com/survey/usergroups.asp> to apply. The "special offer" code is 225. This offer is still good through April, perhaps longer.

Keep Out Prying Eyes

If you've switched to the high speed of DSL or cable Internet service and love it, you may not know that your hard drive is wide open to prying eyes (with computers). No protection is built-in for keeping others from entering your computer for various reasons. A friend told me just how easy it is for anybody to take a look at every hard drive on your line. What you need is a firewall to prevent that and here is where you can get it FREE.

Steve Gibson, developer of the famous "SpinRite" software has a Web site offering such, and will even shock you when he tries to enter your computer. Try <http://www.grc.com> and his other sub site at <http://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2> devoted to testing systems for possible security holes. It provides information as to why these exist and offers suggestions for better security implementation.

I read in a Central Pennsylvania PC Association message to members of that author's computer being probed five times within two hours according to a utility that logs such things, not to mention the other times listed in his log. He also offered the following sites for more information on probes; <http://www.robertgraham.com/pubs/firewall-seen.html> or <http://www.robertgraham.com/pubs/index.html>.

I don't know the author's name but I thank him for the extra sites etc., although I've been planning to include Steve Gibson's sites for your information for a couple of months now.

Something Free From Adobe
Sharing photos is as easy as drag and drop with this free download from <http://ActiveShare.com> from Adobe. Their ActiveShare desktop software integrates with that companion Web site to present a complex solution that makes it easy for everyone from kids to grandparents to join in photo fun by offering a central posting site.

So far, it only applies to Windows 95/98/NT 4.0. Look it over on that Web site and see if it isn't a great plan. It allows you to share your new photos with all your relatives or friends (notice I said "or"), even if they live in other states.

On the same topic, I'll include the following information and comments from Cathy Grammer Margolin who finds and shares things for her user group and includes me in her e-mailings.

Free Photo-sharing Web Sites
At Comdex, everyone had a photo-sharing web page where you could upload unlimited pictures for free to share with friends and family.
1. <www.zing.com> — nice site
2. <www.clubphoto.com> — can edit pics online
3. <www.gatherround.com> — by Intel — recently improved
4. <www.photopoint.com> — must e-mail pictures

A review of all these sites can be found at:
<http://www.shortcourses.com/specialtopics/sharing/sharing.htm>

Visit <http://www.shortcourses.com/> for a free short course that includes explanations of photo file formats, digital cameras and photo printers.

From Our Friends At Atlanta PC User Group
Michael Rogers of the Atlanta PC User Group did all the footwork for their group and included my readers. I surely thank Michael and Richard for the help, and their message follows:

"Richard Young, President of World Skyline has extended the following offer to User Groups reading the (deals) column. Unlimited online training for a year for just $99. A savings of about 30% off their regular price of $129. The training includes computer-related topics such as the MS Office Suite, Oracle, HTML, MCSE and many others. Also offered are personal development courses such as stress management, time management, grammar skills, and other work related course work. You can check the curriculum and demos, and even enroll at <http://training.atlsky.com>. Please use the code USGRP020604 to get the training deal."

Next are a couple things I found in newsletters that I thought you should know about.

High Speed Data Connection Information
Are you wondering if it would be possible to get a DSL or cable connection in your area, and how about the cost of these services? Thanks to the Macon User Group newsletter I have the answer for you. Go to <http//:www.getspeed.com>, enter your address, and GetSpeed will show you what is available, and the pricing.

8

Do Yourself a Favor and Check That Battery

I read this very important tip from Phyllis Evans in the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization DATA BUS. You can download PRAM Battery Checker (freeware) at <http://www.polar-orbit.com>. Installation 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. Don't keep track of your battery and you may pay the consequences.

I meant to include more on free ISPs, but I had to take them back out because of a lack of space this month. I also have some interesting feedback from people on all that, and will include some of those URLs if I have room next month. I keep thinking I won't have enough to write about each month, but so far that hasn't happened. I hope everyone gets something out of it. Thanks to all who send me information. One was even from a person picking up one of the Central Florida Computer Society newsletters at a Hamcation where we had a membership table.

This month's column was another rush job, but not without deals. Please tell me how to come up with more hours in a day to get everything done, especially when I'm supposed to be retired. I'm sorry to say that I have not gotten my Bobclick.com Web site up and running yet. I haven't even started my Web Express software in a couple of months. Be patient.

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to of products, no matter how enthused I sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <dealsguy@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.deals guy.com> for past columns. √

CD-RW DRIVES UNSEAT OTHER MEDIA
FOR REMOBABLE STORAGE, BACKUP, ARCHIVES
by Ken Fermoyle

The king is dead! Long live the king! (Until a successor ascends the throne.) The "dead king" in this case is the traditional 3.5-inch floppy disk drive and its cousins: Zip drives, Super Drives, tape backups and other removable storage media.

The new king is the CD-RW (Compact Disk-ReWriteable) drive. The successor, already waiting in the wings, is the DVD-RW (Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disk, depending on your orientation). Portable USB hard drives may be pretenders to the throne.

Of course I'm exaggerating a bit. You can't count out the lowly 1.44-megabyte floppy drive just yet. It is adequate for typical word processing and other applications that don't produce big files. Prices are low enough for both drives and diskettes to keep them alive for the near term. Shipments should peak in 2001, then start a slow decline.

Iomega's Zip and Jaz products, Super floppies, tape drives and their kin won't disappear overnight either, but they all have drawbacks that will make it hard for them to compete with CD-RW drives in the long term. Generally, they have more limited capacity, higher media costs, and

9

aren't priced all that much lower than the CD products. (Note that Iomega recognizes the inevitable and introduced its own CD-RW drive, the ZipCD, in June 1999.)

For example, a 100MB Zip drive costs about $100 to $130, depending on type (internal, external, SCSI, parallel, USB). Disk prices range from about $8 to $15 as this is written in mid-January, 2000. A 1GB Jaz drive costs about $200, with disks going for $90 to $100.

By comparison, CD-RW drives hold 650MB and sell for anywhere from $170 to about $400, with most in the $200-250 range. That means their disks hold as much as 6.5 Zip 100 disks and roughly 66% as much as the 1-gig Jaz disk. The kicker is the cost of media.

CD-R disks cost just $1 to $2 each. You can only write files to them once, no rewriting, but you can write to them in increments; adding files until the disk is full. This makes them ideal for permanent backup or archiving files. They are easily portable, since they are compatible with all CD-ROM drives of recent years. And they're so cheap you can use a lot of them without busting the budget.

CD-RW disks cost more, about $5 to $6, but you can write and rewrite to them just as you would a floppy or Zip drive. Generally there are more compatibility issues than with CD-R disks; they may not be readable in any CD-ROM, or even other CD-RW, drives. They are best used for day-to-day backup.

The nice thing is that a CD-RW drive gives you the best of both worlds, since you can burn CD-R disks or use CD-RW disks in one.

Let me tell you about my experiences with two quite different types of CD-RW drives I've been using for four months, since Sept. 1999. One is a Verbatim brand, Model 4420a (4X Record, 4X Rewrite, 20X Read): the drive itself is made by Mitsubishi. The other is more exotic: a Compro external drive from ACS Innovations. Made specifically for use with notebook computers, it weighs just over a pound and connects to a notebook PCMCIA slot or USB port.

Necessity led me to the CD-RW drives. I was preparing to do my Media Workshop in Orlando, FL last fall and realized the PowerPoint slide show I use to support my presentation was far too big to fit on a floppy. Putting it on a CD-ROM disk was the logical way to go. I began by investigating CD-R (record only) drives. They were cheap ($160 or less) but I learned this was because they were being phased out. I was advised to go for a CD-RW drive instead—and settled on the Verbatim 4420a as one of the fastest in my price range.

Installing it was simplicity itself. I merely disconnected my existing CD-ROM drive and plugged in the new drive in its place, using the existing cable. It came with just!burn software from CeQuadrat (taken over by Adaptec in mid-1999), which I found very easy to use after an initial goof. I ruined several disks by trying to format them not realizing that they were preformatted by Verbatim!

The just!burn Wizard makes it easy to create backup, audio or data disks. The CD-ROM disks I've burned with the CeQuadrat software have been readable by every CD drive in which I have tested them. The tests have

included drives in a half-dozen desktop computers and three notebook computers. I should mention that none of the drives was more than 24 to 30 months old. I can't vouch for compatibility with older drives.

The Compro notebook CD-RW drive is a real gem, the world's first CD Rewriter with CD 4X recording, 4X rewriting and 20X reading function all in a slim 23mm height housing. Bare drive weight is only 18 oz. Other weights: battery pack w/5 AA batteries (Alkaline or NiCAD or NiMH 1.2V rechargeable), 7 oz; AC adapter, 8 oz; PCMCIA card/cable, 5 oz; USB cable, 4oz. Current price is $269.

The whole works adds up to 42 oz., but one normally would use either the PCMCIA or USB cable so actual weight, including a few disks, is less than 2.5 lbs.

The amazing thing is how well this little drive works. It performs so well I don't use it only with my notebook. It is connected via USB port to one of the desktop machines in our office when I'm not traveling.

The Compro slimline came with Adaptec's Easy CD Creator, which most experts consider the top CD creation program. It includes DirectCD, which lets you treat CD-RW drive like a floppy drive. You can copy information in small packets and erase separate files ("random erase") instead of having to erase the entire CD. Packet writing allows sending of small amounts of data or "packets" to CD-R and CD-RW drives without wasted overhead and without risk of data transfer interruptions (buffer underruns).

Easy CD Creator makes it simple to create music, photo, video, and data CDs. You can even make bootable CDs. I have V.3.5 but plan to upgrade soon to V.4.0 which has some desirable features added. (Check it out at <www.adaptec.com/products/overview/ecdc.html>.

As always, your comments and experiences with these or similar products are welcome. I also invite you to visit my website: <www.zyworld.com/wordsmithken>.

OUTLOOK EXPRESS 5.0
by Jack Vander-Schrier
submitted by Betty MacKenzie

This month I would like to cover some of the fun things you can do with Outlook Express 5.0.

This program can be found when you install Internet Explorer 5.0. If you are running Internet Explorer 4.0, it is very easy to upgrade to 5.0. If you have Windows 98, just click on "start," then on "windows update."

Microsoft will give you a list of upgrades for your machine, and one of the choices will be Internet Explorer 5.01. Install this upgrade and you will be on Outlook Express 5.0. One bit of warning—this will only work for those of you on the Internet directly. Sorry AOL or Prodigy users.

Once you have opened Outlook Express, at the top you will see a tab that says "message." Click on this and then click on "new message," which will give you another drop down menu, and click on "select stationery." This will give you a list of existing stationery for your machine, but if you

notice, you will see a button that says "create new." By clicking this button, you will bring up the stationery wizard.

Read the start up page and then click "next," and you will get a form that says "picture." Click on the "browse" button and click a picture that you have downloaded from the Internet, or scanned into your computer. Your picture will then appear in the box to the right. You will also see various boxes where you can move the picture to the top or bottom or to either side.

You will also see a box that says "tile." If you click "vertically," the picture will run up the left side of the stationery, or if you click "horizontal," it will run across the top. You can also change the color of the stationery on this page. When you are done making your selections, click on the "next" button.

You will then be given a box which allows you to change the fonts to something a little different than Times Roman. Pick your font and the size of the print. The larger the number, the bigger the print.

On this page you can also change the color of your print. When done making changes, click on "next." You will see a box that says "left margin" and "top margin." As you click on the up and the down arrows, you will see the margins changing by 25 pixels at a time. If your picture is on the left side of the page, click on the up arrow a few times until the typing is to the right of the picture. This will prevent the writing from being on top of the picture.

When you are done, click on "next" and type in the name of the stationery,

such as "my picture," without the quotes. As soon as it is named, you will get a screen that says "my picture" in it, then click on "ok." You will then get a blank message with your stationery in it.

If you click on the top on "format," you will see a choice marked "background." Click on that and you can add sound to your stationery. Click on "sound" and find a wav file or a midi file that you downloaded from the web or one you created using the sound recorder. Click on the browse button to find the music in your PC. You can then choose if you want to play the song once or up to 99 times.

After you click "ok" you can create your message. Click on "send" and the person at the other end will be amazed what you were able to do on your computer.

If you would like to test this out, feel free to send it to me at jvanders@myself.com, and I will be more than happy to help you with any problems you might have.

INTERESTING INTERNET SITES
compiled by Mike Alcorn
Better Surfing
<Http://www.quickbrowse.com/cgi-bin/aqb_logon.pl>
The site that patches your favorite pages together into one (or more) big pages. If you have a set of sites that you visit frequently, why not use Quickbrowse to stitch them together into a single page. It speeds up surfing. You can also set up several different virtual pages if you wish. This concept is a step beyond the Yahoo (and others) idea for personalized home pages. In my limited testing, Quickbrowse did have some trouble with sites that required a login and/or a password.

Online bookmarks
Here is another one of those "why didn't I think of that" ideas: online bookmarks.

Many web surfers would be lost without their bookmark lists of favorite places. Their utility is often lost if they switch computers frequently, use a laptop and a desktop or use more than one browser. The answer to all these problems is online bookmarks. As you might expect, this idea has occurred to more than one person. You might check out the following sites:
<www.blink.com>
<www.clickmarks.com>
<www.hotlinks.com >
<www.bookmarkcity.com>

Comparison Shopping
I wrote last month about shopping bots. Here is some additional information: **<www.clickthebutton.com >**
This site installs software on your computer that puts a "button" in your system tray. When buying online you are supposed to "click on the button" when you get ready to purchase. ClicktheButton will pop up a list of comparison prices so you can be sure you are getting a good deal. They also allow you to select a basket of items and comparison check for the best total price—including shipping according to them. ZDNet thinks highly of this service. I think the concept is great but the execution was lacking in my very limited trials. Try it yourself and see what you think.
<www.rusure.com>
Their web site serves both as a price comparison tool and as a shopping portal, containing thousands of links to related sites, including product reviews, shop reviews, popular shops, auctions, classifieds, users' opinions, catalogs, shopping guides, freebies and much more. In addition, they offer a downloadable application that sounds very much like the one offered by ClicktheButton.
<www.evenbetter.com>
This site is similar to both of the above. For me, its current downside is that it concentrates on books, CDs movies and DVDs but not electronic and computer items. However, it may be just right for your needs.

Online Mailing Lists
As I do more and more surfing I find myself getting on more and more e-mail lists. I now get almost daily e-mails from perhaps a dozen different web sites. The good news is that these sites make it very simple to get off their lists should I wish to do so. If you don't get enough e-mail, you might look into <www.topica.com>. This site provides access to some 40,000 mailing lists covering almost every topic imaginable.

Scanning tips
<www.scantips.com>

Wayne Fulton has put together one of the best sites for information about scanners and scanning that I have found on the web. The material here is appropriate for beginners but knowledgeable folks will learn much as well. For those interested Wayne has put this all in a real book which is available at the site for $21.95.

Investor-Advice
<www.kidon.com/media-link/ index.shtml>

If you are looking for sources of news from far-away places, this may be the place to start. There are thousands of links to newspaper, radio, T.V, magazine and other sites around the world.

<www.wn.com >

WN stands for World News and they have that. More than just news-news, you can zero in on topics like <www.earthquakenews.com>, <www.solarpower.com>, or <http://www.gm1.com/> (which covers the currently-hot topic of genetically-modified foods).

The Tax Man is Coming
<http://pages.prodigy.net/ agkalman>

Alan G. Kalman makes this site available as a public service. Its purpose is to provide a portal for users to access tax assistance, education and resources that are available on the World Wide Web for individual and small business taxpayers.

One of the nicest features of this site is the fact that Alan keeps his links up-to-date. He even posts the following statement on his home page: All links are verified at least once a month. Last test: 2/17/00.

Calling All Information Junkies
<www.newsletters.com>

Come here to browse a slew on investment and legal newsletters, from the Buyback Letter to Investech. You can search by title or author, plus areas like finance have 16 subtopics useful in narrowing your searching. Keep in mind there is a lot of marketing going on at this site. Also available are bios and links to the letters. To buy you simply add to your cart and give them your credit card number.

[*It is suggested that readers check the privacy statements on the above various web sites and then make their decision about what information use of the service would allow the site owner to collect and whether the reader trusts them to abide by their privacy statement. If there is no privacy statement or if it is vague, be extra cautious.* Ed.] √

A WEB SITE FOR EVERYONE PART 3: HOW TO MAKE ONE!
by Stephen Morgan

Over 800 million Web pages are in existence. More than 20,000 domain names are being registered every week: will it ever stop? My guess is that it will only get worse. By the end of the year, there could be over 2 billion Web pages out there, so why not join in on the fun! So in this article we will talk about how anyone with Internet access can create his or her own Web site!

These days, creating a simple Web site is as easy as writing a letter. With most word processors, you can save the document you just created as a Web page, just by clicking on file, and specifying "save as HTML." Even multiple pages will just save as a very long home Web site. This is a great way to create a Web site, add some pictures and then practice uploading it to your Internet Host.

Perhaps an even easier way to create a Web site is to use one of the commercial services such as Yahoo/GeoCities. These sites use simple wizards to let you have creative control over how the Web site looks. They let you import documents, pictures and create the links that bind everything together. As a test, I created 2 different Web sites on Yahoo/GeoCities. My first simple Web site took me 20 minutes to create (I was told it should take about 10 minutes), mainly because I was plagued by long waits between the set-up screens. I then went in and created an elaborate site, with several up-loaded pictures and articles that were already stored on my computer. This site took me over 6 hours, with over an hour spent just uploading docu-ments to the Web. Both sites looked very good, since the wizards guide you on where to put pictures and text. Yahoo/GeoCities also lets you upload a pre-existing Web site that you have made using other programs. This is a huge time saver since you will not waste time uploading each individual document and using the Yahoo wizards. The downside to having a commercial site host your homepage is that they will put advertising on every page of your site.

My favorite program for creating Web sites is Microsoft Publisher. With just a basic knowledge of creating documents with pictures, it is very easy to use the included Web Wizard to create a detailed Web site. The same site that took 6 hours to create online took me less than 2 hours with Publisher. By using simple copy all and paste commands, along with its easy import picture commands, my Web site took less than 30 minutes to set up and get the documents in place. Then I spent the next 90 minutes being picky as I aligned the text and pictures by using the "view as Web page" command. As easy as it is to use, Publisher has a few drawbacks. First, it does not always accurately show exactly how the Web page will look. Secondly there is no embedded File Transfer Protocol (FTP) utility that would allow it to be easily uploaded, this makes you download and learn 3rd party software.

Another Microsoft product, FrontPage is one of the most powerful consumer/professional Web page creation programs out there. Unfortu-nately, it also has a high learning curve. It took me about 10 hours of reading the "FrontPage for Dummies" book and following along in order to start using FrontPage. I would estimate that it took about 20 more hours of experimenting with the program and consulting the book again before I was confident about my ability to create a good site. Once you do learn it though, FrontPage makes it a snap to create a Web site that will look just as good on the Web as it does on your computer. And since it includes its own File Transfer Protocol program, it is a snap to upload and

update your pages with compatible hosting services.

Creating a Web Site is something that more and more people are doing. The last estimate that I have seen is that there are over 5 million personal Web sites available on the Web. I think that within 3 years, a majority of the world's industrialized population will have their own Web site. The coming incredible fusion of computers, wireless modems and the Internet will continue to make access to the Web as common as using a telephone is today. When you add in the hundreds of companies actively competing to host Web sites, you should agree, there is no better time to start than today

MAILING LIST MANNERS 101
by Adam C. Engst
<ace@tidbits.com>

It's no secret that I'm a huge fan of mailing lists. I both subscribe to and operate a number of lists on many topics, and I spend much of my day communicating professionally and personally in these discussion groups.

And yet, I'm troubled by behaviors I see in most lists. Many people pay little attention to spelling, grammar, and the basic composition of their messages, post pointless notes, and bulk up replies by quoting complete originals and appending huge signatures. How you write in e-mail—especially in public places like mailing lists—affects how other people regard you, your opinions, and your knowledge. Think of it this way: if mailing list messages were a reflection of personal hygiene, you don't want to come across to others like you need a shower, clean clothes, and a haircut.

Here then are the main behaviors that I would encourage for all mailing list participants. If you're as bothered by the problems in mailing lists as I am, feel free to refer others to this article for advice. You can link to it permanently at this URL: <http://db.tidbits.com/ getbits.acgi?tbart=05386>

Write Carefully—I realize that I risk sounding like a pedant here, but in cases like this, I don't care. Writing skills in the general Internet populace stink, which means you can make yourself look even more intelligent and thoughtful than you are by writing well. Good writing isn't difficult, and requires only grammatical sentences and proper spelling. You don't need to be a professional writer or be able to make words flow trippingly off the tongue.

You should also follow a few basic rules when writing e-mail:
• Don't use all capital letters for more than a word.
• Insert a blank line between paragraphs.
• Surround URLs with angle brackets to avoid problems at line breaks.
• Don't use text styles (like bold or italic) or text colors in mailing list messages, since many people won't see them and may even see HTML tags instead.

Quote Sparingly—One of my peeves

16

with mailing lists is that people seldom delete unnecessary quoted text in their replies, with the worst being people who reply to a message in a digest and quote the entire digest. Quoting sparingly does require manual work, since most e-mail programs automatically quote the original message in replies. But failing to edit the original wastes everyone's time and bandwidth.

In some e-mail programs, you can select some text in the original message, press a keyboard shortcut, and have only that text appear quoted in the reply. (Eudora for the Macintosh does this with its Command-Shift-R shortcut.) Other e-mail programs assume that replying with some original text selected means you want to quote only that text.

Especially problematic are e-mail programs that quote an original message by appending it to the bottom of the reply with no quote marks in front of each line. That prevents inline replies, since there's no easy way to differentiate original and new text, so users of those programs tend to leave the entire original hanging off the end of the reply. That's fine in private messages, but in mail destined for a list, it's just sloppy. Unfortunately, the only solution to this problem is to switch to a different e-mail program.

Avoid Junk Messages—Another complaint about people's behavior on mailing lists revolves around "junk" messages. I'm not talking about spam, since spammers aren't constructive members of a mailing list. Instead, junk messages fall into the following categories:

• Unsubscribe messages mistakenly sent by subscribers who didn't read (or locate) the instructions for leaving the list. Every list goes to lengths to simplify the process of signing off, and yet a large number of people still send unsubscribe messages to the list itself. Read and save the welcome message you receive when you subscribe to a list, then refer to it when you want to unsubscribe.

• Me-too posts sent by well-meaning list members replying only to convey that they agree with a message or had a similar experience. A Web-based poll is a better way to take votes on a topic.

• Welcome messages that appear when someone new joins the list. No one on

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FREE *LIVE* event,
Tuesday, April 8

eXtreme

Place: United Artist Theatre
30170 Grand River
Farmington Hills, MI
at West River
(So of 9-Mile, W of Middlebelt)

Time: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

For registration and complete information, visit www.microsoft.com/extreme
HOSTED BY:
SouthEastern Michigan Computer Org.

17

a mailing list needs to read "Glad to have you on the list!" from everyone; send such messages to the new member in private mail.

• Congratulation messages that appear after a member of the list has mentioned some milestone or personal triumph. Again, send these in private e-mail.

The moral of the story is simple: Avoid sending junk messages to a list. They're easy to identify as you type—just ask yourself if the message would be of interest to the majority of the mailing list. If not, that doesn't mean your message is worthless: the original sender might appreciate being welcomed or congratulated via private e-mail.

Write Descriptive Subjects—When you receive messages from a mailing list, the first thing you see is the subject line. Which of these subject lines would you rather see on a mailing list devoted to, say, tropical fish?

> wondering

> Recommendations for fish that can live with cichlids

Unless your telepathic powers are better than mine, the first subject line tells you zero. So, the first rule of subject lines is to make them descriptive.

Another problem affects primarily digest readers. They see an interesting message and want to reply, but when they do so, their e-mail program uses the subject line of the digest (Tropical Fish Digest #251) rather than the subject of the message. That leads to messages being sent to the list with useless subject lines, since the title of the digest is rarely descriptive. There's no good solution to this problem, although two mediocre workarounds exist.

• Copy the subject line from the message to which you're replying and paste it into your reply's subject line, prefixing it with "Re:." This is effort well spent.

• Have the digest sent as a MIME digest and use an e-mail program like Eudora Pro that can separate the digest into individual messages in a mailbox. The problem goes away, but, for some people, so does the point of receiving the digest version of a list.

Sometimes you want to reply to a message but change the topic of discussion. When you do that, you should change the subject line; if you don't, people following the thread will be confused when your message doesn't match its subject. Some people (and some programs) indicate when they've changed a subject line by appending "(was <the original subject>)" to the new subject. That's acceptable but results in long and unwieldy subject lines that work badly in list archives.

On the other side are people who change the subject lines on every message they send. That's equally problematic, since it prevents list members from reading (or sorting) messages that are related by a shared subject line.

If you create descriptive subjects, maintain the correct subjects if you're a digest reader, and change subjects only when appropriate, you'll be well on your way to being admired as a paragon of list etiquette.

Use Short Signatures—My final gripe about mailing list postings is that many people have long signatures at the end of their messages. E-mail signatures are useful, but mailing list signatures should be kept to a mini-

mum. This is especially true for lists that have digests because the signatures can take up a significant portion of the digest. For instance, messages with long signatures sent to the moderated Info-Mac Digest are rejected with a note asking the person to resend with a shorter signature.

Many e-mail programs let you switch between multiple signatures, but you have to remember to do so for each message. There's a trick you can use in Eudora Pro (but not Eudora Light) to switch signatures automatically when you're replying to messages that come from mailing lists. Follow these steps:

1) In the Signatures window create a shortened signature for use with mailing lists called "Short signature." Your name, affiliation, e-mail address, and URL are all that is essential.
2) In the Personalities settings panel, create a personality called "Mailing list signature." Fill in the Real Name and Return Address fields, and select the "Send mail whenever sends are done" checkbox. All the other fields can be blank, and the checkboxes related to checking mail should be deselected.
3) Switch to the Personality Extras settings panel, leave the Stationery pop-up menu set to None, and choose Short signature from the "Signature when not using stationery" pop-up menu. Click OK to save your personality settings.
4) Open the Filters window. In filters that move messages from mailing lists into specific mailboxes, add a Make Personality action, and from the Personality pop-up menu, choose "Mailing list signature."

You've created a signature for use

with mailing lists, connected it with a specific personality that differs from your dominant personality only in the default signature setting, then created a filter that automatically assigns that personality to incoming messages from mailing lists. Now, whenever you reply to a message from a mailing list, Eudora Pro knows to use your mailing list personality and thus your mailing list signature. You'll still have to choose your mailing list signature manually when sending a new message to a list, but all replies will use it automatically.

Ridin' that High Horse—I freely admit that there's nothing new in this article (well, except maybe the Eudora tip above). These recommendations have been floating around the Internet as long as there has been an Internet. The sad fact is, though, that mailing list manners haven't improved with time.

So why can I complain? Two reasons. First, I think it's important that this topic, old as it is, remains in the public eye.

Second, I do the work every day to create a mailing list that tries to conform to all the recommendations above. In TidBITS Talk, I do the following to every message: <http://www.tidbits.com/search/talk.html>
• Basic editing and spell checking, which is significantly eased by Eudora Pro 4.2's inline spell checker. I also add blank lines between paragraphs, add angle brackets to URLs, and remove styled text.
• Eliminate unnecessary original text in replies. This task is easy since wholesale deletions take little time.
• Reject junk messages. Most mailing

lists aren't moderated, but eliminating junk messages, or even multiple identical answers to the same question, is a major advantage of moderation.

• Normalize subject lines. I try to keep similar messages in threads and break new thoughts out into new threads, which also improves the quality and coherence of our archive database.

• Signature pruning. Since I'm already editing messages, it's little extra work to trim signatures to their essentials.

I do all this work because I think it makes for a far better list experience, and highly positive feedback from the members of the TidBITS Talk list confirms this. Another advantage is that this work tends to keep the list volume down, since I'm less likely to post messages that require a lot of work to clean up.

I'm not trying to be smug—I love it when I can post submissions to TidBITS Talk without a lick of work. I also don't expect most other people who run mailing lists to expend this level of effort (though I wouldn't complain if some did). Instead, my goal here is to educate people who participate in mailing lists, since only by improving our list manners will mailing lists continue to become increasingly pleasant and useful.

From TidBITS#480/ 1 0-May-99 √

MAILING LIST MANNERS PART II
by Adam C. Engst
<ace@tidbits.com>

Response to "Mailing List Manners 101" in *TidBITS-480* has been tremendous, so much so that I've decided to add a few additional suggestions for ways people can improve quality of life on mailing *lists.* Keep in mind that these are all *sugges*tions. We should all be sensitive about encouraging people to abide by them rather than being dogmatic about their adoption; oftentimes, circumstances prevent people from following each suggestion as fully as they would like.

<http://db.tidbits.com/
getbits.acgi?tbart=05386>

First, I owe an apology to those for whom English is not a native language. Although the readers who chided me about this after last week's article spoke for others, the admonition is well taken. Please do not let my recommendation of grammatical English prevent anyone from participating in mailing lists where English is the standard language. We're all enriched by the participation of people from other countries and cultures, and to restrict that on the basis of grammar is self-defeating. I also encourage everyone to check to see if the sender of a poorly worded message might be struggling with an unfamiliar language—a glance at the sender's e-mail address or signature often identifies people for whom English is difficult.

Second, I should have qualified my statement by noting that adherence to grammatical rules is secondary to providing useful information. Several people commented that if they need technical help, they're not particularly worried about the language in which it's couched.

That said, there were a few additional recommendations that bear noting.

Avoid File Attachments—We considered discussing file attachments last week but decided not to do so because acceptable behavior varies between *lists* and because a number of attachments are sent without the user realizing.

In general, unless a list actively encourages the use of attachments to messages, you shouldn't send them. Most mailing lists consist of people using a variety of e-mail programs under different operating systems. That's even true for a list devoted to a Macintosh-only program like HyperCard, for instance, since people often read e-mail at work, where they may use a Unix machine or Windows box instead of the Mac they use at home. Then there are Web-based e-mail clients, which may not be able to deal with attachments at all. Thus, it's likely that any attachment won't be readable by a significant percentage of people on the list. If you're thinking about attaching a file that contains primarily text, instead copy the file's content into the body of the message.

Attachments are also a concern because many people aren't careful about the size of attached files. Attaching a 1 MB file to a message may be as easy as attaching a 1 KB file, but that 1 MB file may cause significant problems for the mailing list program itself (consider the disk space implications if the program created a separate file for each recipient of a 600 person list—600 MB of data) and for individual recipients on the end of slow connections.

Another problem with attachments is that many people send them without realizing that they've done so. Now

that many e-mail programs support inline graphics, people copy images into their messages without realizing that those images are in fact sent as attachments. Similarly, users of Netscape Communicator may find themselves sending VCard attachments without noticing. In Netscape Communicator, open the Preferences dialog box, switch to the Identity panel, and deselect "Attach my personal card to messages (as a VCard)" to avoid sending VCards with every message. Since most people still use e-mail programs that don't understand VCards, VCard attachments tend to confuse or annoy recipients. Finally, the Microsoft Exchange e-mail server can generate WINMAIL.DAT attachments (which contain information that Microsoft e-mail clients understand but which aren't Internet standards) with every message, but it can also be configured to restrict those attachments to destinations known to be running Exchange as well. If you're receiving WINMAIL.DAT files, ask the sender to ask their e-mail administrator to look into the Exchange configuration.

There are of course cases where attachments are perfectly acceptable. For instance, on the small mailing lists we run for our families, the occasional family picture isn't usually a problem. And a mailing list run for a publication submissions panel may want everything sent as attachments.

Don't Send HTML Mail—I commented in the previous article that you should avoid using text styles or colors in messages for mailing lists because there's no telling what people will see. This point deserves some

expansion, because it can be more problematic than I implied.

Many e-mail programs, including such popular ones as Emailer, can't render HTML-formatted messages, and even as HTML support improves, there will be plenty of people who won't upgrade or who prefer to use programs that will never support HTML formatting. As with attachments, then, there will be numerous people on almost any mailing list who won't be able to read your message as you intended. (Eudora Pro offers the option of sending both styled & plain text to avoid this problem.) Worse, depending on how you've sent the message and on the e-mail programs of the recipients, they may see the straight HTML markup. And if someone replies to the HTML formatted message, the quoting can render the message even more unreadable.

Some mailing lists explicitly forbid use of HTML formatted messages for this reason, and even if that's not specifically true of the lists you frequent, it's best to avoid sending messages with text styles to mailing lists.

Some e-mail programs generate HTML formatting by default, so you may have to change settings to prevent it. For the programs listed below, I've identified the location of the formatting controls. Note that I'm using the arrow (->) as a shorthand notation indicating navigation, so the first item below would expand to: "From the Special menu, choose Settings, then scroll down to the Styled Text settings panel."
• Eudora Pro (Mac): Special -> Settings -> Styled Text
• Eudora Pro (Windows): Tools -> Options -> Styled Text

• Netscape Communicator (Mac/Windows): Edit-> Preferences -> Mail & Newsgroups-> Formatting
• Outlook Express (Mac): Edit -> Preferences -> Message Composition
• Outlook Express (Windows): Tools -> Options -> Send

Watch Recipients—Mailing lists that lack explicit Reply-To headers often accidentally encourage another behavior which can prove annoying. If there's no ReplyTo header, most e-mail programs address replies to the original sender of the message. That's fine. However, if the person replying wants the reply to go to the list, the easiest way to include the list address is often to perform a Reply To All action, which replies to both the original sender and the list. Replying to all has the desired effect of making sure the reply goes back to the list, but it has the side effect of sending two copies to the original sender (one directly, one via the list).

Obviously, this isn't a major gaffe, but it's confusing to the person who receives the duplicate messages. I'm never quite sure whether the person meant the reply to be private or public, which can affect how I continue the conversation. Worse, I may reply in one fashion after seeing the direct message, then realize that was a bad idea when a second copy arrives later by way of the list.

My recommendation is to avoid sending messages to both individuals and lists if it means the individual will receive multiple copies. There may be exceptions to this general rule, if, for instance, the direct message is likely to arrive more quickly or if there's a chance that a list moderator will reject the message.

22

Respect Other People's News—This is a somewhat odd suggestion, but I think it's important. If you learn information concerning another person that might be of interest to a mailing list, respect that person's right to post their news when and if they see fit. You may wish to query them in private e-mail to check on their plans, but it can range from rude to distressing to break important news for someone else. For instance, if you found out a friend was pregnant and broke the news for her on a list, you're both stealing her thunder and potentially creating an awkward situation if she didn't wish to let everyone know. Worse, imagine the nightmare that could result (this has happened) if a well-intentioned person posted a short note about a close friend dying to a public mailing list. List members' confusion, grief, and desire for details could make it even harder on the people close to the deceased trying to handle the logistics of informing friends and relatives. From TidBITS#481/17-May-99 √

I WANT TO HURT
MY COMPUTER
submitted by Ken Fermoyle

(The following was forwarded to me some weeks ago, and I just had to share it with you. It expresses frustrations we all share at times. I tried without success to backtrack and find the author. So I will just credit it to that famous writer, Anon. If you are, or know of, the actual author, please write me at <kfermoyle@earthlink.net> so I can give credit where credit is due! Ken Fermoyle)

I want to hurt my computer. I want to buy a software program that, when run, causes my computer to suffer grievously, though not permanently. When my screen freezes or turns blue, I want a special button I can push to make the CPU start squealing like a motherboard.

I want a device that stores an electrical charge in my telephone. For every minute I spend on hold waiting for technical support to answer, the charge would increase in intensity. When the guy from tech support finally answers, the electrical bolt of energy would be discharged into him. This should not affect my ability to hear what's going on at the other end of the line, of course. And a special function would allow the volts to double every time a tape-recorded message urges me to continue holding. "Your call is important to us," the featureless voice always claims.

I want my phone to be outfitted with a translation program which will re-constitute this irritating reminder into the truth: "Actually, we already have your money, so we couldn't care less about you. Our technical support department consists of two college kids, both of whom are busy playing Doom. Eventually, one of them will come on the line, but it will be the one who doesn't speak English."

I want my modem to sense when my PC has committed an "illegal function" and issue a warrant to arrest Bill Gates. When my system crashes and I lose a file that has taken me more than an hour to create, I want someone from the computer company to come out and retype it for me.

I don't understand why new, "upgraded" software creates files that cannot be read by old, reliable software with the same name. Is there no one in the computer industry who has noticed that word processor files all look alike once they are open?

23

Why can't 6.0 recognize a 7.0 file? It's all just words, isn't it? There should be a rule that when software engineers buy a new car, their old cars should cease to function. If they don't understand why this is happening, they should call me and I will explain it to them.

How come when my computer gets a virus, I'm the one who misses work? I want to know why my printer always jams on the last piece of paper or the last sheet of checks. When this happens, it makes me want to put sandpaper into the manual feed and print the Emancipation Proclamation.

I am really tired of hearing about all the horrible things that will happen with the Y2K problem: sewers will regurgitate, all of my fillings will return to the dentist, my high school reunion will be held in Spanish, etc. Why doesn't anybody ever ask these computer programmers how in the world they didn't know the year 2000 would follow the year 1999? Software engineers are supposed to be pretty bright people—what? did they need a memo or something?

I recently bought a program that is supposed to tell me if my computer files are Y2K-compliant. The program won't work because—get this—my CD-ROM player is too old (I bought it 34 months ago). The manufacturer doesn't sell an "updated driver." Thus, to find out if my computer is Y2K-compliant, I need to buy another computer.

I want to know what good is a Web search engine that returns 324,909,188 "matches" to my keyword. That's like saying, "Good news, we've located the product you're looking for. It's on Earth."

I want to know why, when I had a tiny hard drive, my operating system was virtually crash-proof and took up so little space. My new operating system is five times the size of my original hard drive. With every "upgrade," it seems to grow 75 percent. That's as if every time your mother-in-law came to visit she weighed another 500 pounds. Now I've found out that my PC no longer "recognizes" my floppy drive. How could they not recognize each other? They live together!

Please understand: I don't hate my computer. I just want to hurt it every once in a while. √

**BOARD MEETING
3/12/00
Carol Sanzi**

PRESENT: President Chuck Moery, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairmen Tom Callow and Warner Mach, SIG-MAC Chairman Harold Balmer, SIG-INTERNET Chairman Brian Brodsky, and Past President Bob Clyne.

The meeting was called to order at 12:08pm.

TREASURY: The balance on hand is $2,591.03 with $25 not deposited. The current membership is 159. Roger Gay is concerned that SEMCO's membership is declining. In January, Tony Dean, Al Fisk, Robert Packard, and Russell L. Sweet did not renew their membership. In February, the membership of John R. Nagy, Lutz Reiteer, Alan E. Sonnanstine, and John L. Tatum is expiring. Is there anything we can do to solicit their return?

OLD BUSINESS

SEMCO DATA BUS CD's: Last month, 15 SEMCO CD's were sold, bringing in $85. The excess was due to Franz Breidenich paying for the early delivery of a CD and by Carol Sanzi paying in advance for hers. Bob Clyne will take orders today from anyone desiring to purchase the SEMCO CD.

SOCIAL HOUR: Carol Sanzi agreed to pass around a sign-up sheet requesting refreshments. She will also record the names of the volunteers who have donated refreshments. Roger Gay motioned that Warner Mach be reimbursed $6.53 for the monies spent on supplies. Harold Balmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the board.

MICROSOFT eXtreme: Since there were no volunteers last month for the April 8 eXtreme event, a sign-up sheet will be passed around today. Tom Callow agreed to talk to the audience about SEMCO, but we still need a chairperson.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLICITY: Bill Agnew has agreed to write an article describing the goals and achievements of SEMCO. The article will be used to publicize our user group. Chuck Moery is developing a PowerPoint presentation about SEMCO. It will be used as an opening to the general meetings and to publicize SEMCO.

AWARDS: At Chuck Moery's request, Bob Clyne has created an award certificate for volunteers in a CD label format. Suggestions were made to possibly place it on an old CD, put it in a frame, or present it in a CD case.

SPEAKERS: President Chuck Moery has arranged for speakers for the next two meetings. Today, Marilyn Sage will be demonstrating computers that sew. Next month, Dawn Smith will talk about refilling inkjet printer cartridges. Chuck suggested that a future presentation could be made by the Olde Stock Corporation.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL LETTERS: Roger Gay brought it to the board's attention that the supply of membership renewal letters is low. Tom Callow moved to authorize the reprinting. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53pm. √

SIG-MAC
3/12/00
Harold Balmer

CD WARNING
by Phyllis Evans

I guess it's time to repeat the warning about using PostIt notes on CDs. I recently received a call from one of our members regarding a tray-loading CD drive that would not give back the CD. Files on the CD could be accessed without problem, but trying to eject the CD resulted in an empty tray. To make a long story short, someone had placed a PostIt note on the disk. When it was removed, some adhesive apparently remained. The heat from the drive caused the adhesive to soften enough that it stuck to the drive mechanism. It was eventually removed with needle nose pliers. The moral—never use adhesive-backed notes on anything that goes into a drive. When heat is applied to adhesive, the worst will usually happen and repairs could become costly.

One other warning about CDs—if

you have one of the new computers with the slot-loading CD or DVD player, do not, I repeat, do not try to insert a mini-CD in that slot! Slot-loading CD players are designed to read only standard sized CDs. The little ones come out the hard/ expensive way—at the repair shop. √

APRIL MAC MEETING will be a JOINT SEMCO MEETING: 1:45 pm, Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet printer cartridges.
2:45 pm, Pgm: Q & A.
MAY MAC MEETING: (Let's try this again!) Phyllis Evans on Backing Up Your Hard Drive: What? How? √

SIG-INTERNET
3/20/00
Brian Brodsky

The March meeting was cancelled since the library had a book sale scheduled on the same day.

The next meeting will be held on the third Monday, April 17, 2000 at 6:30pm at the Bloomfield Twp Public Library.
TOPIC: Brian will demonstrate Adobe ImageStyler. Contact Brian Brodsky, Res 248/544-8987 (evenings) or Work 248/395-0001 Ext. 228 for directions/info. √

SIG-DATABASE
3/15/00
Larry Grupido

Next meeting: Wednesday, Apr 19.
Meeting dates are on the third Wednesday: May 17, Jun 21, Jul 19. Info: Larry Grupido, (810) 664-1777, ext 151, or lgrupido@tir.com √

IBM & COMPATIBLES

SIG-IBM
3/12/00
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

NEXT MEETING TOPICS:
MARCH: Joint Meeting: Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet printer cartridges to save money.
2:45 pm, Pgm: Resume regular IBM meeting. √

SIG-ADVANCED
3/6/00
Franz Breidenich

NEXT MEETING: APRIL 3
Meetings held first Monday at 6:45pm at the Troy Public Library. **TOPIC:** Wide ranging discussion of computers & computing. √

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
3/12/00
Tom Callow

NEXT MEETING TOPIC: Question and Answer Marathon II— Chairman Tom Callow will moderate a full meeting's worth of questions and answers. √

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
3/12/00
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

NEXT MEETING: Q&A, member-directed discussion.
April **Host:** To be announced.. √

SEMCO CALENDAR

April 9 - 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.**

SIGs-IBM & MAC Joint Meeting 1:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet printer cartridges to save money.

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. April **Host:** To be announced.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE, 3:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Question and Answer Marathon II—Chairman Tom Callow will moderate a full meeting's worth of questions and answers.

SIG-MAC (All Apple Macintosh products), 1:45 pm, **Room164. Pgm: Joint Meeting:** Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet printer cartridges. After: Room 168, Q & A.

SIG-ADVANCED

Apr 3 - Thursday, (Next: May 1) 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 19 - 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.

SIG-INTERNET

Apr 17 **-** 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:** Brian will demonstrate Adobe ImageStyler.

SEMCO

May 14, 2000 - SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday).

Beth Fordyce
beth_fordyce@macgroup.org
(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

*.DOS (Computer Users Grp of S.E.Mich.)
 Apr 8 - 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 22 - 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 14 - 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 27 - 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 13 - 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
 Apr 16 - 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: Back to the Basics, Beginner stuff for new Mac owners.

MacTechnics, **(MAC user Group)**, Coffee 9am, SIGs 9:30am, Main meeting 11am.
 Apr 15 - 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)
 Apr 20 - 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
 Apr 13 - Thu 7pm (Meet 2nd Thu) MAC: Troy Library, I-75 at Big Beaver; Apr 19 - Wed 7pm (Meet 3rd Wed) IIGS, Apple II/Apple-Works, Parent/Teachers Ed, PC, Internet: St Bede School, 12 & Southfield; Apr 20 - 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)
 Apr 4 - Tuesday, (Next: May 2) 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.

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

Wayne State U. Mac User Grp
 Apr 8 - 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 computers to disabled people.
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 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
19940 Mansfield
(Greenfield/8-Mile area, Detroit)
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.)

MARCH REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator
J. Farrington
Roger Gay
Pat Kreiling
Joan and Roland Maki
Carol Sanzi
Dawn Sanzi

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
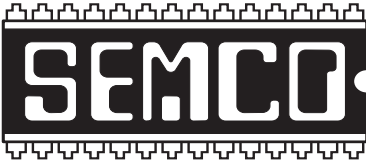
**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO MEETING - Sunday,
APRIL 9, 2000

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. Joint Meeting,** see SIG-
IBM and SIG-MAC.

SIG-IBM (for IBM & compatible users), 1:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm: Joint
Meeting:** Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet
printer cartridges to save money.
2:45 pm, Pgm: Resume regular IBM meeting.

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
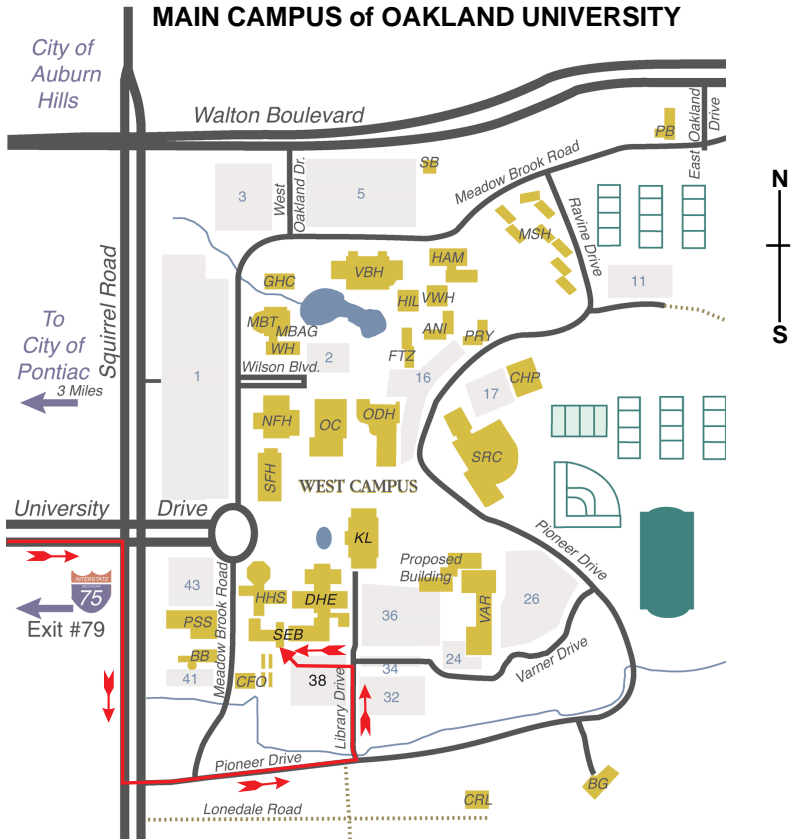discussion. April **Host:** To be announced.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE, 3:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Question and
Answer Marathon II—Chairman Tom Callow will moderate a full meeting's
worth of questions and answers.

SIG-MAC (All Apple Macintosh products), 1:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm: Joint
Meeting:** Dawn Smith, of the Ink Connection talking about refilling inkjet
printer cartridges to save money
2:45 pm, Room 168. Pgm: Question and Answer.

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

MAIN CAMPUS of OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

City of Auburn Hills

Walton Boulevard

Squirrel Road

To City of Pontiac
3 Miles

University   Drive

75
Exit #79

Meadow Brook Road

PB

East Oakland Drive

SB

West Oakland Dr.

3   5

Meadow Brook Road

MSH

Ravine Drive

11

N — S

GHC   VBH   HAM   HIL   VWH

MBT   MBAG   ANI   PRY
WH   2   FTZ
Wilson Blvd.   16   17   CHP

NFH   OC   ODH   SRC

SFH   **WEST CAMPUS**

KL   *Proposed Building*

43   HHS   DHE   36   26   *Pioneer Drive*

PSS   SEB   VAR
BB   CFO   38   34   24
41   32   *Varner Drive*

Library Drive

Pioneer Drive   BG

Lonedale Road   CRL

MAP LEGEND

SEB   Science and Engineering Building
DHE   Dodge Hall of Engineering
KL   Kresge Library

Note: SEMCO meetings are in the **Science** (west) wing of the **Science and Engineering Building**, hence the **"Science Building"**

DIRECTIONS

Driving north on I-75 (from Detroit and suburbs), take Exit 79 (University Drive), stay to the right on University Drive to campus entrance. Turn right (south) on Squirrel Road (at traffic light which is just outside campus), turn left on Pioneer Drive (next street to left). Turn left off Pioneer Drive onto Library Drive (second left) toward Kresge Library. Turn left before you get to the buildings, into parking lot 38 on the left. Proceed to the far end of the parking lot. After parking, proceed up the stairs to the Science Building, which will be just ahead of you, to the right.

Member of

Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG