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SEMCO MEETINGS
Sunday,
October 13, 2002

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

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

Aladdin Update

Aladdin has released some updates and a special offer. They offer user groups a discount as usual. You can check it out on my Web site at my Announcements page <http://www.dealsguy.com>, or you can register at <http://www.aladdinsys.com/support/usergroups/index.html>.

Help for the Investor (Its About Time!)

My thanks to Norm Black who leads an investment SIG in the Alamo PC User Group for connecting me with "High Growth Stock" (HGS). If you are an investor (many User Groups have an investment SIG), this could be just the ticket for analyzing your investments. Norm says a member made them aware of HGS, and now both Alamo Investment SIGs, as well as some of the members, are using it. Since I've not yet tried their product, HGS folks wrote the description that follows:

"High Growth Stock investing solutions (HGS) introduces you to an exciting set of investment products and services that keep you abreast of the pulse of the market, meeting the needs of the individual and institutional investor alike. We are dedicated to offering systems, products and services that, together, will provide an end-to-end seamless process for successful investing in a volatile and often tricky market. The heart and engine of our offering is the HGS investor software developed and launched years ago. It is continually enhanced and upgraded several times each year with greater capability, functionality, and features that allow our clients to be smarter and more profitable investors, as well as the capability to do whatever style of investing you aspire to.

"Those that master HGS investing solutions usually produce well above market average returns. Typically, HGS clients enjoy high profits quickly, 25% in 8 weeks and potentially to 100% in 16 to 24 weeks [remember this is an HGS writeup]. Quickly identify the 'cream of the crop' when selecting stocks. Identify where the money is flowing, and narrow down the search from a warehouse of over 8,700 stocks in 200 industry groups, in twelve sectors and three markets, to select the best candidates to buy and sell today.

"High Growth Stock investing solutions can accommodate any investing style, from value investing, which places emphasis on the fundamental characteristics of a company, to momentum investing, which strictly concentrates on technical analysis, to growth investing. However, with HGS investing solutions we are proponents of growth investing, which

uses the best of both fundamental and technical analysis from value and momentum investing, respectively.

"In summary, the HGS investing solutions provides whatever style of investing you aspire to and enables you to get the job done efficiently and quickly. In addition, there are several training CDs that take you through the basics from intermediate levels to advanced concepts of how to use the tools. The training CDs are a series of movies and PowerPoint slides that make it easy to follow in several case studies. In addition, there are free weekly market reports at our website, providing up to date reviews of the market. We also feature a free Learning Center of case studies that assist you in the principles of HGS investing.

"There is a free HGS Forum at our website, hosted by Yahoo, that you can participate in or just read the wonderful exchange of ideas and investment suggestions from our clients. In addition, we provide a monthly newsletter (invariably 20 pages in length) that you can subscribe to and download at your convenience. The HGS seminar is three days in length and gives you an in-depth understanding of the HGS strategy, process, and software tools. For more details on High Growth stock investing solutions go to <http://www.highgrowthstock.com>.

"A special offer and Promotion is offered to members of the PC User Group readership of Bob Click's DealsGuy monthly column.

"A FREE, no strings attached, risk free, sixty (60) days 'introductory subscription' to High Growth Stock (HGS) investing solutions (a $125.88 value). This offer is designed for the 'professional' investor, not the beginning investor or user. What you receive for this no cost offer is:

A. A CD containing all the information and data that our regular clients would pay $755 for.
B. The free no risk 60-day 'introductory subscription' to HGS investing solutions 'begins the day you install the CD' with the HGS investor software and stock market data, and ends 60 calendar days later.
C. A fully functional copy of the HGS investor software, developed, and marketed by Industry Monitors.
D. The HGS historical database of stock/market price and fundamentals from our partner, Quotes Plus, Inc.
E. The HGS monthly newsletter written by Ian Woodward and Ron Brown, who are professional investors, for the most recent month, and via our website for the months published during your 60-day introductory subscription.
F. Free weekly HGS market reports written by Ron Brown, made available via our website.
G. Instructional tutorial movies (9 in all) for using HGS investor software, that provide an excellent overview of all the software and numerous techniques.
H. Guide to High Growth Stock investor software, the software user guide.
I. The High Growth Stock investing strategy guide is a 60+ page presentation by Ian Woodward to assist HGS investors in developing solutions for selecting high growth stock portfolios, industry groups, and stocks.
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M. Last, but not least, the best investment strategy, techniques, software, data, seminars, weekly market reports, monthly newsletters, forum, training CDs, and learning center in the world to both individual and institutional investors."

To order your FREE, no strings attached, risk free, sixty-day introductory subscription to High Growth Stock investing solutions, go to: <http://www.highgrowthstock.com/Order/Trial.asp?from=Click>.

If, after the free 60-day trial period, you are convinced that this investing solution really works, the High Growth Stock folks make this special temporary offer. The annual subscription cost for these services is $755.26. The HGS folks have agreed to a first year subscription period of 14 months instead of the usual 12 months, an additional value to you of another $125.88. To convert to annual after your trial offer, order these services at <http://www.highgrowthstock.com>.

When you look at the entire deal I have arranged, you are getting 16 months total of service for $755.26. The first two months are totally free with no out of pocket money. They say that without this deal, it would cost you $755.26 + $251.76 for the extra four months. It's a $1,007.02 package for $755.26, a 25% saving with no financial commitment for the first 60 days. If after 60 days you're not convinced it's for you, just walk away, and it didn't cost you anything but some time to evaluate this fine product. Just using the free trial is a great deal for the serious investor.

How About Secure E-mail For A change (PCs only)

I received this offer from Eric Leve at Centuriansoft. I realize that some folks don't care if somebody might read their e-mail, but here is software to encrypt it at a good price, bundled with another great product. I'll post the information received from Centuriansoft on the announcement page of my Web site <http://www.dealsguy.com> where you can see their argument for encryption, full descriptions of the products in this deal, and their offer. Please read it all carefully.

Briefly, SoftClan "e-cryptor" allows the user to create and send self-decrypting e-mails that do not require the recipient to have any additional software to decode the message. Once received, the recipient needs only to expand or execute the attachment, click on the resulting envelope icon, and finally, input the password to access the enclosed and formerly encoded information.

Also, for a limited time Centuriansoft will include a free copy of "Steganos 3 Security Suite" with your order. Steganos 3 Security Suite is a complete security solution for your PC. Its features include seven great products, and I liked the looks of them all. MSRP for SoftClan "e-cryptor is $59.95, but DealsGuy readers can get the entire package for just $39.96, shipping included. Shipping for Canadian

customers is $7.00. Call 1-202-293-1634, or you can send an e-mail to <eleve@centuriansoft.com> and mention promotion code 777 to order. Visit their Web site for information on their entire line of products at <http://www.centuriansoft.com>. More next month.

That's It For This Month

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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 encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <Bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com> for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

For Inveterate XP Tweakers Only

By Carl Siechert

Co-Author of Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out

One of the fun things about Windows XP and Windows 2000 is that there is so much tweaking you can do if you want to. You don't need to do any of these things, but if you like peeking under the hood and making a few adjustments so things run just the way you like, you can.

Group Policy

Group Policy lets you make all manner of settings—everything from configuring the desktop to hiding certain drives to preventing the creation of scheduled tasks. These settings (and hundreds more) are stored in the registry, which you can edit directly. But Group Policy is much easier to use than a registry editor. A few notes before you dive in:

To use Group Policy, you must have Windows XP Professional or Windows 2000; it's not available in Windows XP Home Edition.

To use Group Policy, you must be logged on using an account that's a member of the Adminstrators group.

If your computer is not a member of a Windows 2000 Server domain, any settings you make in Group Policy affect everyone who uses your computer. However, there is a crude workaround that lets you set up two groups of users—those who are affected by Group Policy settings and those who are not. For details, check out pp. 1074-5 in "Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out." (Caution: this is the first of several plugs for my books.)

Ready, Set Go…

Start Group Policy by choosing Start, Run, and typing "gpedit.msc". (If you end up using Group Policy very much, you'll want to make a shortcut to gpedit.msc.) The next two folders and their subfolders house the most interesting policies, although you might want to check out the others as well.

Then, in the left pane, you should select a subfolder of Computer Configuration\Administrative Templates or of User Configuration\Administrative Templates. Select a useful sounding policy in the right pane, and an explanation of the policy appears. Keep

poking around until you find something that interests you. To make a setting, double-click the policy name, and then choose an option in the dialog box that appears.

Pretty easy stuff, but you're exploring where few Windows users dare to tread. Unless you work hard to enable policies that, for example, prevent you from logging on, the settings under Administrative Templates are pretty safe. Nonetheless, you should read the explanation carefully before you make a policy setting.

Want more information? For a complete reference to Group Policy in Windows 2000, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/reskit/en-us/default.asp>. See Windows 2000 Group Policy Reference in the contents pane. Nearly all the information in this reference applies to Windows XP Professional as well, although it doesn't include the policies that are available only in Windows XP.

Another good resource is the Group Policy Object Settings spreadsheet, which can be downloaded from <http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsXP/pro/techinfo/productdoc/gpss.asp>.

Although the spreadsheet doesn't explain the settings, it lists all Administrative Templates policies and shows which ones apply to each operating system; it also provides a convenient way to record your own settings. You'll also find more information in "Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out" (Chapter 34) and in our new book, "Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000" (Chapter 19). The latter book, which should be in stores in August, includes a number of specific recommendations about policies you can set to better secure your system.

It's At Your Service

The Services snap-in is included in the Computer Management console. To open Computer Management, right-click My Computer (on the Start menu or in an Explorer window) and choose Manage. In the left pane of Computer Management, select Computer Management (Local)\Services and Applications\Services. (Tip of the day: You can open the Services snap-in within its own console. You can find a shortcut to Services in the Administrative Tools folder, or you can simply choose Start, Run, and type "services.msc".)

So which services should you turn off by changing their startup type to Manual or Disable? This Web site offers some good advice: <http://www.blkviper.com/WinXP/servicecfg.htm>.

And (time for another plug) "Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000" provides a brief description of every service included with Windows XP and Windows 2000 and offers recommended settings.

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Tip - Unplugging a running computer, or shutting down with a CD or floppydisk in its drive can cause problems.

Drive Image 2002

By Bob Clyne
clyne@mich.com

Drive Image 2002 creates image files of your hard drive and also has a few other talents. PowerQuest chose to label the successor to Drive Image 5 as Drive Image 2002, even though the CD shows up in Windows Explorer as "DI6," and it is referred to in places on PowerQuest's website as version 6. Only marketing people know why manufacturers can't just use consecutive numbers for their versions.

Drive Image is reasonably easy to use, but read the manual anyway; you may learn a lot and save yourself a lot of time. PowerQuest used to have some of the best manuals around, but apparently in an effort to keep costs down, the manuals have shrunk in size, and much good and some vital information has been left out. The PDF files make up for some, but not all, the omissions from the paper manuals. Read the screens carefully; you may save yourself a lot of time in the long run.

PowerQuest technical support has also suffered in the effort to cut costs. Free telephone technical support is gone. There is free e-mail technical support, and there is paid telephone technical support. They also have a knowledge base, FAQs, and patches on their website.

Making the Image

Drive Image will make it's image files on a local hard disk partition other than the one it is imaging, on a CD writer or several other removable media drives, or on network drives. Note, though, that USB and Firewire CD-R/RW drives are **not** supported. The ability to image to a network drive is something that I have long wanted, but I was not able to set up networking under DOS, even after reading several documents about how to do it. So I was glad to see this feature added. There are several reasons that you might want to save the image to a network drive, for example, suppose you have a computer that does not have either a CD writer or a partition (other than the one you are trying to backup) with enough space to hold the image file(s).

Drive Image can image any drive that it can close all the files on from inside Windows, but I was not able to try this because I didn't have any drives that it could close all the files on. If it cannot close all the files on the drive to be imaged, it boots out to DOS. This can be done in either of two ways: it can boot to actual floppy disks, or it can boot to a virtual floppy disk that it creates on your hard drive. I tried both, but I prefer the actual floppies. In any case, create the Rescue Disks when prompted to do so.

Be aware that if you have SCSI drives and your SCSI adapter is not included in their selection, you will have to get the DOS driver for your adapter or chipset and put it on the boot disk and edit the LCDRSCSI.BAT file to include it. The program does not provide for adding more SCSI drivers from the program. IDE drives should not be a problem.

I suggest that you keep your image file names DOS-friendly, that is, short, with no spaces, apostrophes, or other fancy characters.

If you are writing the image directly to a CD-R/RW drive, Drive Image will automatically span multiple discs if the image requires it. If you are saving the image to a hard drive, you can let Drive

Image make it all one file or tell the program to split it into whatever size chunks you specify. This capability is accessed via the "Advanced" or "Options" buttons. Choose a size appropriate for the media you intend as the final destination. You can also split the image into chunks and change the compression level in Image Explorer, but you will need space for both the original image and a copy of it.

If you really want to be sure your image is good, check "Verify image contents." This will make the process take significantly longer, but it provides an extra level of confidence.

There are several considerations in choosing the compression level. I can think of no reason to choose no compression. High compression will take more processing time but less time to actually write the data and less space to store the data than low compression. If you have a fairly fast computer, you should probably choose high compression because the process will be limited by the time to write the data rather than by the time to compress it.

If you have the hard disk space, I suggest that you save the image in CD size chunks to the hard disk and then burn the CDs. This takes an extra step, and the CD will not be bootable, but if there is a problem in writing a CD, you have only wasted that CD. If you image directly to CDs and there is an error on the fourth CD, for instance, you have wasted all of the CDs and your time to that point. There is no way to recover. You have to start over.

Restoring the Image

While we hope to never need the backup images of our drives, the reality is that sooner or later, we will need them. If your machine will still boot into Windows, you may be able to set up your restore from there; otherwise, you will have to boot to DOS. If Drive Image writes the image directly to a CD, it will make the CD bootable, but unless your computer is normally set to boot from the CD first, you may find it easier to boot from the rescue disks rather than change the boot order in the BIOS. Drive Image will let you restore an image to its original location or to a different partition, even a hidden partition. The destination partition can be the same size, larger, or smaller than the original partition as long as it is large enough to hold the material in the image, plus perhaps, a little working room. All changes made since the image was created will be lost, and if you have the operating system in one partition and your applications in another partition and you only restore one of the partitions, you may put your computer in a very confused state. For instance, if the registry does not match the applications, the result may not be a pretty sight.

Some months ago, I had a hard drive die. It was under warranty and was replaced by the manufacturer. I then used Drive Image 5 (the current version was not out yet at the time) to restore the new drive to the configuration of the old one when the image was made. The operation went quickly and without a hitch.

If you only need to restore one or more files or directories rather than the whole partition, Image Explorer is the tool. It will do this for you. It also has several other talents, as you see when you read the manual. Image Explorer runs from Windows, not from DOS.

Other Tools

Drive Image also includes a drive copy utility that will copy one hard drive to

another hard drive residing on the same computer. The drives do not have to be the same size. This is handy if you are replacing a still working drive or if you want to create a second copy of a partition in connection with upgrading your operating system.

Drive Image also contains a subset of the capabilities of PartitionMagic under the heading of "Disk Operations."

Boot Disk Builder

Boot Disk Builder is PowerQuest's utility for creating DOS boot disks for imaging to network drives. If you have a network and would like to be able to write your images directly to a network drive, try it. You will need the name the computer is known by on the network and the share name of the drive you want to store to. It will be much easier if these are both short and do not contain any spaces. If they do contain spaces, you can change the names, add another share name, or get ready for a learning experience. Of course, you also need security access to the target computer. If your network interface card (or chipset) (NIC) is listed and things go correctly, congratulations, you've done it. If it doesn't go OK and you still have the training wheels on your computer, or you become apoplectic, or catatonic at the sight of a DOS prompt, I suggest you forget imaging to a network drive for a while. For those, stout of heart, and able to deal with frustration, and with some time to spare, forge gallantly onward. You might want to read the last six lines from Ulysses by Alfred, Lord Tennyson before starting.

If your NIC is not in Boot Disk Builder's list, you will have to add it. First, you need to know the make and model of the NIC. You can usually get this from Device Manager if you don't already know it. You will also need the DOS drivers from your NIC manufacturer and another file. You will be asked for a .INF file for your NIC. I can't really tell you what will work but OEMSETUP.INF is not likely to work. The little box with the three dots to the right of the space for the file name will let you browse for it. The file you want will be on your NIC manufacturer's disk, but you are on your own for this. Next, you will need a driver file. This will likely have a .DOS or an .EXE extension and, hopefully, will be in a directory like MSLANMGR or NDIS2. It appears that you really have to know what you are doing here or employ some intuition and a willingness to keep trying until you get it right. I fell into the latter category.

Once you get the NIC added, select it and click next. You will be asked if you want to create a floppy disk, save the boot disk contents to a folder, or create a Virtual Boot Disk file. I suggest that you create a floppy disk, and then, when it asks you again, create a Virtual Boot Disk file.

When you have the floppies done, reboot the machine to the boot floppy. Watch the screen as it boots. If there are no errors, you have arrived. If you have errors on the first disk, don't bother inserting the second disk. Just hit Enter when it prompts for the second disk. It will complain and then give you a DOS prompt. Check your NIC manufacturer's information for clues. On my notebook computer, which is using a PC Card for an NIC, I needed to run another program to provide cardbus services. This program had to be added to the floppy and its name added to the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. I also had to make a change to the PROTOCOL.INI file.

If the errors started after the NETBIND command, you probably chose a wrong file when adding your NIC in Boot Disk Builder; go back and try again. If the NETBIND command completed successfully, then your problem may be easier to fix. Change to the NET directory and run NET. It has a graphical interface, but you will have to navigate by the keyboard. The arrow keys work, and you can go to any of the functions by holding the Alt key and typing the highlighted letter. There will probably not be a connection listed in the Current Connections. Go to the browse function and see if it will list any. If it does, select the one you want and hit Enter, taking care to note the exact name of the computer and the "directory." This is actually the drive share name rather than a directory or folder name. It should now be in the Current Connections. At this point you could just run MOUSE.COM and then put in the second disk and run PQDI, but then you would have an error and have to do this every time. The error is probably in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file in the line that starts "net use" followed by a drive letter and a colon and a space. The rest of the line is the path to the network drive and is probably where the problem is. It should be of the form "\\computername\drivesharename" without the quotes. However, if you have any spaces in your computer name or share name, add the quotes just where they are above, with the correct names that you noted above in the Net program. The Boot Disk Builder isn't bright enough to put the quotes in, and it won't even let you do it in that program, but here you are in control. There are probably a lot more things that can go wrong but those are the ones I encountered.

The easiest way to make changes to the floppy is to take it to another computer; use Notepad to edit the AUTOEXEC.BAT, and then take it back to the computer you took it from and try it. It is much quicker than rebooting into Windows each time to edit.

After you get the first disk to run without errors, copy the AUTOEXEC.BAT file from the first disk to the second disk, or you will get an error when you insert the second disk.

VF Editor

If you get it working from the floppies and really want to be able to image to a network drive from a virtual floppy, you get to make the acquaintance of VF Editor. Essentially, you just need to make the same changes you made on the floppies, but you can't edit files while they are in the virtual floppy. Just drag the file you want to edit to the desktop or to another folder, then edit it, save it, and drag it back into the virtual floppy file, replacing the old file. You can also drag new files into the virtual floppy if you need to. When you have all the changes made to the virtual floppy, save it and open Drive Image. Set up the imaging operation in Drive Image and click Finish. The computer will then close Windows and reboot to the virtual floppy. If you got it all right, the computer will make the image and reboot into Windows.

If there are problems, you have to wait for the computer to reboot into Windows and repeat the procedure of editing the virtual floppy and try again. There is no opportunity to make changes in the middle. There is one other little quirk involved in using the virtual floppy technique for imaging to a network drive. The network drive does not seem to

show up in Drive Image unless it is mapped to a drive letter in Windows. Just having it accessible via Network Neighborhood will not suffice; it must be mapped to a drive letter.

Conclusion

Drive Image is a good program, and with every revision they add a few new features. I believe it is well worth the price.

System Requirements

Processor: Pentium or better
HD: 35 MB of free space for the program
CD drive: any speed
Operating system & RAM:
Windows XP Pro or Home—128 MB
Windows 2000 Professional—64 MB
Windows 9x, ME or NT 4 workstation—32 MB

List price: $69.95
PowerQuest
P.O. Box 1911
Orem, UT 84059-1911
<http://www.powerquest.com>

As a SEMCO member you can order Drive Image from User Group Relations (Gene & Linda Barlow) for $35 plus $5 S&H per order. Go to <http://www.ugr.com/order> and use code UGSEP02.

COMPUTER TERMS

JPEG—Joint Photographic Experts Group. For complex color images, uses compression, some detail loss.

TIFF—Tagged Image File Format. For bit-mapped images, b&w or color, PCs & Macs, scanned images, possibly large files .

GIF—Graphic Interchange File. Popular on the Web, bit-mapped, few colors, PC & Macs, no loss of resolution on compressing.

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What's Your E-Mail License Number?

Bass explores ways to send better e-mail, not waste your recipient's time, and make sure your mail's read

Washington is considering legislation that will force you to get a license before you can send e-mail. No, don't worry, you'll still be able to receive e-mail without any restrictions.

Sure I'm kidding. But it's no joke: People send out lots of e-mail, with much of it needlessly long, valueless, bandwidth-hogging, inaccurate, and, of course, dumb. (Did I miss anything? Right—e-mails full of Fwd: Fwd: Fwd: and >>.)

Over the years, I've collected e-mail tips: ways to help you create e-mail that not only doesn't annoy others, but actually makes your e-mail worth reading.

Think in Paragraphs

You'd be surprised how many e-mails have one, long paragraph. Oddly enough, you may be using paragraphs, but your e-mail program may be missing the hard carriage returns. Suggestion: send yourself, or a buddy, an e-mail and see how it looks. If necessary, add two "returns" between paragraphs when creating the e-mail.

Write Short

Keep your sentences short, and limit yourself to three short paragraphs. Go beyond the Bass International Limit of,

say, four paragraphs, and there's a good chance it won't be read.

No Subject? Adios

Here's my steadfast rule: If I don't know you very well, and your message has a blank subject line, it goes into the trash. The reason is that there's a strong possibility a virus or worm is attached.

Use Smart Subjects

Say the right thing in the subject line and your recipient gets fair warning what to expect in the message.

For instance, even before I started using yahoogroups, I started my message subject with "PIBMUG." For one thing, it helps AOL and Hotmail users, the people who get tons of spam, sort out real messages. (Others thought PIBMUG messages were spam, but that's another story.)

More important, it makes applying rules or filters to e-mail easy. For example, after a Home Office column hits the newsstand, I sometimes receive 100 messages a day. That's in addition to the usual stuff from PR flaks and PIBMUG correspondence. So I've encouraged everyone who sends me jokes to start the subject line with "jokes," enabling me to separate them from business messages.

"Fwd Fwd Fwd"

Of course, if you get lots of e-mail, your threshold for junk isn't very high, and subjects can give strong clues for what to delete right off the bat. For instance, if I see more than two "Fwd: Fwd:" in the subject, it's immediately sent to the trash. Adios.

That's Not Funny

Make sure you at least read the joke before sending it. That's a great technique for determining if it's really funny. No, really—people often send me lame jokes that are excruciatingly bad. Keep a mental note of the type of joke you send, and match it up with their response (or non-response). You may notice you rarely hear back when you send a text joke but often get an "LOL" from a cartoon.

Want to see if people are reading your mail? Flood them with lame jokes—I mean fifth generation forwards of ribald stories or cartoons that weren't funny when they first ran in Playboy 20 years ago. Then slip in a legitimate e-mail and see if you get a response.

And if you're still going to send jokes, remove the millions of ">>>" brackets. The damn things make everything difficult to read.

No Reply Needed

I send dozens of e-mails each day with an explicit message that the recipient needn't reply. That's only polite, because many times the e-mail's just an FYI. So right above the message, I type, "This is just an FYI, so no reply is necessary or expected. –Steve."

Who Are You?

Many users haven't changed the "Reply to" name in their e-mail program, and it drives me crazy trying to figure out who's writing. For instance, one person uses a period—that's right, a dot—as his name. So when I look at the e-mail header, I haven't a clue (and still don't) who he is. Another person didn't know what to use so she stuck "Netscape" into the field, figuring, well, something needed to go there. Head for your e-mail program's Options and poke around until you find a spot that asks for a "Reply with" or "Real Name" and put in your name.

Mail List Netiquette

Many of you subscribe to interactive mail lists. I'm on many, and I moderate quite a few, including my broadband and

CD-ROM yahoogroups. When you reply to a message on this sort of list, it's essentially the same as sending e-mail, but with added restrictions.

Here are a few list rules to consider adhering to and maybe applying to your e-mails.

Don't Waste Bandwidth

So many messages, so little time, right? Well, avoid responses that the entire list won't find useful and feel obligated to at least glance at. So don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply to the sender. Look carefully and you'll probably see the sender's e-mail address near the top of the message.

Good one, Steve!

In case you weren't clear about Wasting Bandwidth, consider this: When replying to messages, do it only when you have something substantive to say. Sorry, "Good one, Steve" does not qualify as substantive.

Snip, Snip

When replying, it takes a few seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. No matter what you do, get rid of the tag line—the information about subscribing and unsubscribing—from the previous message.

Keep Snipping

Did I explain that it's best to quote only those brief portions of the previous message, and only items that are necessary to make your point? Good. I'm not kidding.

Avoid HTML

Stick with straight text when replying or sending messages on lists. Not everyone's e-mail program can read all your fancy fonts and formatting.

Keep Files to Yourself

Attachments are usually frowned upon on mail lists to avoid any chance of getting a virus.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at <www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at <www.pcworld.com/bass_letter>.

What Is This Character?

By Cliff Millward
Utah Computer Society
cliffm@xmission.com

A Character With Character

I remember the first time I heard a telephone announcement say "hit the 'pound' sign." I pondered for a moment and realized (because of my musical background) that they must be referring to the "sharp" key located at the lower right side of the dialing keypad. The "pound" sign to me always has been the character used to denote money in Great Britain. (£) In fact, when I used the Character Map in Windows to look up how to place this sign (£) in my article, Windows referred to it as the "pound" sign! The # is described as the number sign. Microsoft has come out on the side of musicians by calling one of their products C# (sharp.) This naming, I assume, is a cause of humor in Great Britain because they call this sign (#) the "hash" mark. So C# in Great Britain becomes C-hash! Hash is a culinary dish which can include almost any ingredient and, many

times, is nothing more than a conglomeration of left overs!

The U.S. usage derives from an old commercial habit of using the # to stand for pounds on bills of lading. This, however, is not the only name associated with this character. It is also know as the gate, square, grid, crunch, crosshatch, mesh, flash, pig-pen, ticktacktoe, scratchmark, thud, thump, splat, hex, grate, reticule, and recently the "octothorpe." The octothorpe name has been rumored to have been invented by Bell Lab engineers when touch-tone phones were introduced in the mid-1960s. There are other stories about the origin of octothorpe, but who cares? I suppose musicians could call it the D flat key because D flat and C sharp are enharmonic intervals, but computer stores would have a hard time knowing what you wanted if you asked for Microsoft D flat!

The sign also has a darker side to its personality. I have seen it used many times in cartoons to represent profanity (@#*%#). Which nasty word it stands for I do not know — take your pick. Just watch your tongue the next time you order Microsoft C#.

Seriously, this character is a sign of many aliases, so I assume it is up to each individual person to call it whatever he/she wants. Personally, pound and hash are too "earthy" for me; and I don't care for gate, crunch, flash, pig-pen, etc. I like octothorpe! It makes me feel so elitist and intelligent to say, "use the octothorpe key," or "I program in COctothorpe." I could also say, "Octothorpe, Octothorpe," or "Oh, Octothorpe," or "you Octothorpe," and feel better because I have uttered a disguised profanity that few will recognize. (Guess I had better stick to "sharp" or "pound" if I want to stay out of trouble!

Something to "Crow" About?

Researchers in the University of Delaware's ACRES program (Affordable Composites from Renewable Sources) have developed a computer processor made from chicken feathers. The researchers chose chicken feathers because they are strong, made mostly of air, and are a great conductor of electricity. The chip is made from soybean resin and chicken feathers crafted into a composite material that looks and feels like silicon. In early tests, electrical signals moved twice as fast through a feather chip as through a regular silicon chip. The chip, however, has its problems. It is not very smooth, and the microchip industry depends on materials that are ultrasmooth and ultraflat. Now if they could only make computer chips from the leftover food that computer geeks eat while working, we could have a very efficient recycling program! Also, does this mean that in the future, KFC will mean "Kernel Feathered Computer?"

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using the article as long as it is kept in context, with proper credit given to the author. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

Tip - Enlarge your window close boxes so it is easier to hit with the cursor. With Windows Me go to start/settings/control panel/display/appearance. Scroll to active title bar, and increase size to, say, 30.

@#*%#

By Bill Agnew

For 13 years of my home computering it has been a relatively pleasant experience. I have had little trouble (could it possibly be because I was only on Macintosh for 10 of those years?). I didn't do much that was fancy—just lots of word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, web searching, and a little scanning. For me the computer was just a utility. I didn't want to push new functions; I just wanted to do my work. And speed was not important to a retiree.

Last month was a horror. A black cloud settled over my house and left me a shaking basket case. Both computers went down.

The Macintosh

One morning my G3 Macintosh simply wouldn't start. Lord, what would happen to a major engineering project I had going with a deadline.

There was clearly voltage on the power socket, but nothing happened—no lights, no sound, no fan; the CD tray wouldn't work. After a few hours of trying everything, off to CompUSA's service and repair department (in Auburn Hills; the one in Troy wouldn't answer their phones). A day or so later the technician called, and after some discussion it was concluded that a new power supply was not needed. Rather it was the PRAM battery that was down to a 4% charge (after 3 years). There had been no warning; the clock was still keeping time, and who would expect the battery to shut off all power?

The technician, Glen, met me when I picked it up. He showed me where the battery goes, and told me to get one at Radio Shack because it was $10 there and $20 at CompUSA. Besides, they were out of stock. He also showed me two little buttons on the motherboard that I should press with a toothpick for one second each after installing the new battery. They reset something or other. Glen then got them to reduce the service charge from $99 to $19, since he hadn't done more than diagnose the case.

So, after several days of trauma I was back in operation and met my project deadline.

The Compaq PC

In the same week, while the Macintosh was in for repair, my PC laptop refused to go. That's the PC on which I had the October DATA BUS half done, and again a deadline looming. Also, I had just acquired the hardware and software to begin backing up my files, but hadn't installed them yet.

In this case the computer booted, but came up with ScanDisk saying there was a major problem. At that point the computer was frozen, and the cursor would do nothing but move around. Off to CompUSA again, but this time in Troy, phones or no phones, because I had a service policy there. The technician there said "You've got a virus so deep in your system that there is nothing to do but run the recovery disk and wipe out everything on the computer, go back to the state when it was new."

So there went my DATA BUS. I got the clean computer back in one day, but then spent two days getting back on the internet and, with Bob Clyne's help, getting it set up with Pagemaker to do the DATA BUS over

again. In the midst of that, the electricity at our house went off for 10 hours. When it came back on, the microwave wouldn't work (when I found the power plug in the back of a cupboard and replugged it, the microwave came on). The world was coming down around my ears, and I expected next to get a flat tire on my way up to Clyne's in Yale, Michigan, but that didn't happen.

I redid everything I had previously done on the DATA BUS. But two days later when I clicked on a close box, Lo, up came ScanDisk again. Same problem exactly. Back to CompUSA again where they admitted it wasn't a virus at all. After three days the technician said it was apparently a conflict with MacDrive that I had recently installed (on Terry White's recommendation). He disabled it, and everything worked. Then he sold me 128 MB more of RAM. This DATA BUS was prepared on a computer borrowed from Bob Clyne.

Are there lessons in this sad tale? Sure there are. (1) The PRAM battery (Macintosh) can go without warning from the clock, and the low battery can do more things than just mess up the clock. (2) If you go to CompUSA, Auburn Hills, for repair, ask for Glen. (3) Be wary of CompUSA, Troy; they may not know what they're doing. (4) Get to know Bob Clyne. (5) If you live in the country and get electricity from Detroit Edison, buy a gasoline or gas operated generator (4kw will take care of the necessities). (6) Disconnecting and reconnecting the power mysteriously corrects some computer problems. (7) Backup. Backup. Backup!

Idiots

Submitted by Phyllis Evans (AuthorUnknown)

Idiots At The Phone Company

This week, our phones went dead and I had to contact the telephone repair people. They promised to be out between 8am and 7pm.

Letter From The Editor

This month I managed to find two new user member candidates. We need more. A dropout told me he thought SEMCO was dominated by "power users," and he was intimidated by the level of expertise represented in the presentations and Q&A. Another person told me he had no specific questions for the Novice Group, but would like to hear some general presentations on basic subjects like: tips for Microsoft Word and Excel, handling spam, shareware, cutting and pasting, e-mail attachments, PowerPoint, and what can I do with my computer.

Perhaps we should change the name from Novice to New User. How about having a New User Group from 1:00pm to 2:00pm with 45 minutes of presentation and 15 of Q&A. Then the General Meeting, SIG Intermediate, and SIG IBM in that order. That would give a graded program from basic to sophisticated. New Users could leave or stay as long as they felt up to it, and experienced members wouldn't have to come till 2:00pm, and they would lose nothing. SIG IBM would then end at 5:30 pm What do you think ?

Bill

When I asked if they could give me a smaller time window. The pleasant gentleman asked, "Would you like us to call you before we come?" I replied that I didn't see how he would be able to do that, since our phones weren't working. He also requested that we report future outages by e-mail (Does YOUR email work without a telephone line?).

Idiots In The Neighborhood

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: too many deer were being hit by cars and she didn't want them to cross there anymore.

Idiots At The Airport

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?" To which I replied, **"**If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" She smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask."

Idiot At The Office

At a good-bye luncheon for an old and dear coworker who is leaving the company due to "downsizing," our manager commented cheerfully, "This is fun. We should do this more often." Not a word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare.

Idiot At The Computer

I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the life of her couldn't understand why her system would not turn on.

Idiot At The Car Repair Shop

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. "Hey," I announced to the technician, "it's open!" To which he replied, "I know - I already got that side."

BOARD MEETING 09/08/2002 Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present

President Gary DeNise, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Publication Committee Chairman Bob Clyne, and Warner Mach, representing SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier. Also in attendance was DATA BUS Editor Bill Agnew. The meeting was called to order at 12:10 pm.

Old Business

Tom Callow reported that there is no treasurer's report in Roger Gay's absence. Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Warner Mach $14.68 for refreshments. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion, and it was carried.

New Business

Bob Clyne reported that he often receives notification of "User Group Discounts" and wanted to know what to do with them. It was decided that Gary

Continued on page 19

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

October 13: Getting The Most Out Of Your PC: Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate things you can do to tweak your computer and how you use it to make your computer work better for you.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

October 13: Making Your Records Into CDs—Part 2: Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will provide an in-depth demonstration of how to process the music files you have recorded into your computer to improve their quality before writing them to CDs.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

October 13: Q&A: Member directed discussion.

Continued from page 18

DeNise will post them on a bulletin board at the General Meeting for those interested.

Gary DeNise suggested that we welcome new members in the DATA BUS. Tom Callow so moved, Franz Breidenich seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Franz Breidenich moved that SEMCO send a copy of the DATA BUS to Heather Newman and Mike Wendland of the Detroit Free Press with the hope of increased publicity. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

November 4: Meetings held first Monday, 6:45 pm, at the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: 14200 Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 Mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway is to take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd. and turn right. **Topic: Wide ranging discussion of computers and computing.**

Correction: We failed to mention in last month's DATA BUS that the "Computer Corner" article by Joe Shipley was reprinted from the January, 2001, issue of the Phoenix PC User Group News.

November 2002 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)

SEMCO & SIG DATA, & MEMBERS' ADS - Deadline: Sun, Oct. 20, 11:59pm

Members' personal ads free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: agnew@bignet.net. 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).

Bill Agnew
agnew@bignet.net
(to post monthly computer group info)

CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS OTHER GROUPS

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors),
Oct. 26–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>

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville/Port Huron)
Oct. 2–Wednesday, 7pm (Meet 1st Wednesday): Rm 201, Clara E. Mackenzie Library-Science Bldg, 323 Erie St., Port Huron. Ron Walters, 810-679-4144. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>. **TOPIC: Computer Upgrade (Operating System Install)**

DCOM Computer Club
Oct. 11–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
Oct. 31–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 Group)
Nov. 14–Thursday, 6:30pm (**Last Meeting of Group**); Stardock Systems, Farmington Rd, N. of Six Mile, Livonia; Info: Carolyn Kolaz, Pres. at <76460.3040@compuserve.com>.

MacGroup Detroit
Oct.20–Sunday, 3pm-5pm ; Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (corner of Telegraph Rd.). (PhotoShopSIG will meet at 2 pm.) Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. Web: <http://www.macgroup.org> . **Topic: Mac OS X10.2 - Jaguar.**

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group), Coffee 9:00am, SIGs 9:30am, Main meeting 11:00am.
Oct. 19–Saturday, 9am–1pm (Meet 3rd Saturday); U of M, Central & Medical Campus, Medical Science II building. (See map on Web: <http://www.mactechnics.org>). Info: Cassie at <cassiemac@yahoo.com> or 313-971-8743.

MCUG (Michigan Computer Users Group)
Oct. 17–Thursday, 7pm (Meet 3rd Thursday); 35271 Rockingham Dr, Sterling Hts., MI 48310-4917; Info: Jerry Zinger, Pres., <kahuna15@comcast.net> 810-792-3394.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group
Oct. 10–2nd Thur, MAC Sig; Oct. 10–2nd Thur, Golden Masters SIG: Oct. 17–3rd Thur, Green Apple Sig; Eagles Hall in Clawson, 174 Bowers St (one block North of 14-Mile and one block East of Main). Carl Pendracki 248-647-8871 or <carlpen@aol.com>. Web:<http://www.themichiganapple.com>.

Oak Park Computer Club
Meets every Friday, 10:15am (except holidays) at Oak Park Library, Oak Park Blvd. at Coolidge Hwy.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)
Nov. 5–Tuesday, 7:30pm (Meet 1st Tuesday; Carpathia Club, 38000 Utica Rd, Sterling Hts, Pres. Don VanSyckel at <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org> .

SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.)
Oct. 10–Thursday, 6:30-9:00pm (Meet 2nd Thursday); Saginaw. Web: <http://www.svca.org>.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group
Oct. 12–Saturday 10:00am-Noon (Meet 2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Info: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny MeLampy 248-477-0190, TOPIC: **Tips and Q&A.**

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS
SEMCO Members Helping the Community

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
734/453-0349 7pm–10pm or
bfordyce215331MI@comcast.net
You may also contact the school directly: Sister Mary Stephanie Holub
19940 Mansfield
(Greenfield/8-Mile area, Detroit)
313/272-0990

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 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.

JULY REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator
Gary Denise
Betty Mackenzie
Carol Sanzi
Roland Maki
Bert Farmilo
Al Bochenek

Your **SEMCO** membership card is good for a **$1 discount** (not valid with any other offer) on admission to
A1-Super Computer Sales
shows. See
www.a1-supercomputersales.com
or **www.a1scs.com**
for show schedule.

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.

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier
AutoCAD: Comptois, Gay
Genealogy: Cook
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Gay, Yuhasz
Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz
MS Office for Windows: Callow
MS Word: Clyne
Networking: Callow
Novell Netware: Yuhasz
Quicken: Clyne, Gay

Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am-10pm ..... clyne@mich.com
Callow, Tom—248-642-1920 9am–5pm ..... tcallow@voyager.net
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime ..... jerrycandotoo@juno.com
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves ..... scook48227@ameritech.net
Gay, Roger—248-641-7799, 9am-10pm ..... rgay@voyager.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720,12-8pm ..... jvanders@myself.com
Yuhasz, Steve ..... Help@yuhasz.org

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

SEMCO CALENDAR—October/November 2002

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING BUILDING, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY, ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

October 13–SUNDAY(Meet 2nd Sunday)
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 172.**

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 pm, **Room 172. Program: Getting The Most Out Of Your PC:** Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate things you can do to tweak your computer and how you use it to make your computer work better for you.

SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 pm, **Room 164.** Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

NOVICE-IBM GROUP 3:45 pm, **Room 168. Program: Q&A, member-directed discussion.**

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 pm, **Room 172. Program: Making Your Records Into CDs—Part 2:** Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will provide an in-depth demonstration of how to process the music files you have recorded into your computer to improve their quality before writing them to CDs.

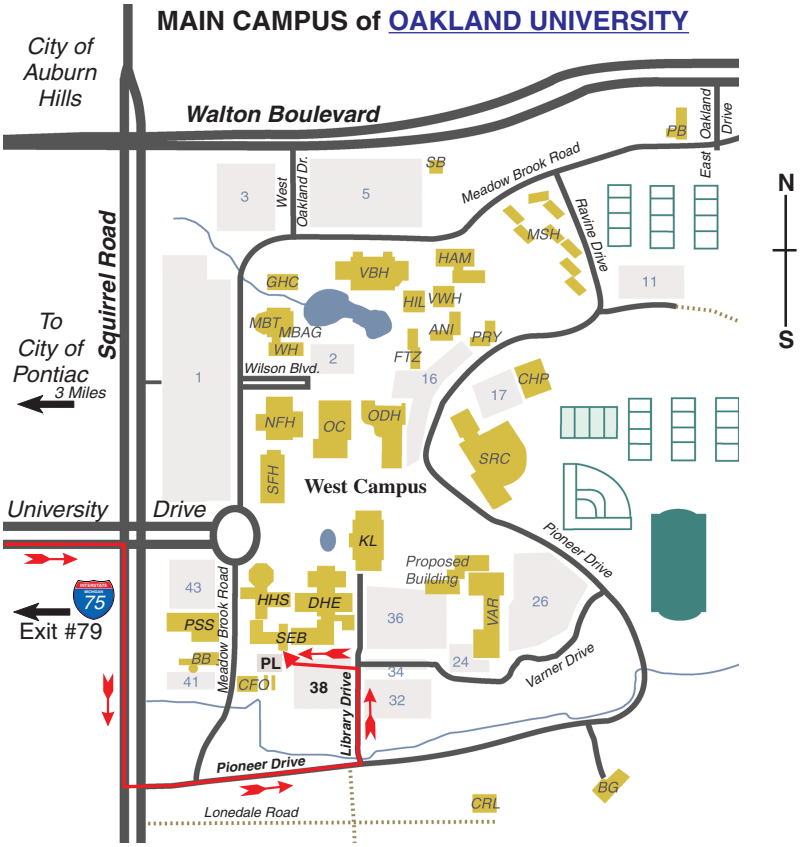
November 4–M0NDAY , 6:45 pm (Meet 1st Monday), SIG-ADVANCED
Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd.,Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway is to take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd., and turn right. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-ranging discussion of computers & computing.**

November 10–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday).
SEMCO, 1:30 pm. **Topic: To be announced.**

http://www.semco.org

PUBLIC INVITED

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



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**.

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 and up to the next lot. After parking, enter the first set of glass doors (at the SE corner of the building).

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.

Member of

Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG

SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707

SEMCO (future meetings)
October 13
November 10

FIRST CLASS MAIL
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