

Official Newsletter
SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

**BALLOT
AND SURVEY
ENCLOSED**
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SEMCO MEETINGS Sunday, January 12, 2003

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

My wife and I attended Fall Comdex and the APCUG activities. It was nice seeing friends I seldom see otherwise. In spite of losing still more sponsors, APCUG did find a few new ones, which is hard to do these days. It was sad to hear about Casady & Greene scaling their operations to bare bones. I feel that APCUG is asking too much of the vendors, causing us to lose them. Someone announced 350 attendees, and I counted over 124 user groups represented, "according to the book."

Not much in the way of deals this month with only three days between my return from Comdex and the column deadline. I'll fill in with Comdex comments, which is another sad story. You probably knew that there were 1000 less booths at last year's Comdex. This year was no exception with yet another 600 fewer booths. Everything including registration was inside the LV Convention Center (old part) with plenty of space left over. Many booths were smaller than last year, and there were numerous booths

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

The annual meeting of the members of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. will be held Sunday, January 12, 2003 at 1:30 pm in Room 172 of the Science and Engineering Building, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan. The election of Officers and Members at Large of the Board of Directors of the Corporation will take place at the annual meeting.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

SEMCO intends to publish a membership directory in early 2003. This directory will list e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for all members who give their permission. The directory will be distributed with the DATA BUS only to members. Please send your current e-mail address and/or phone number to semco@semco.org if they were not already included in the 2001 directory.

with names, but no occupants. Key3Media, owner of the Comdex shows, is severely stressed financially, and for sale. On the other hand, they have already announced Comdex will be back in Las Vegas next year Nov. 15 – 20, 2003 (to dispel rumors). I believe it will still exist there, but we'll see.

I noticed that the trend, started by Microsoft, of having a Partner's Pavilion, with many of their associated vendors parked in six foot booths within several small islands of booths, has spread to many other large vendors, too numerous to mention. That way those vendors can get exposure to the show floor's attendees, but at a greatly reduced cost. Comdex officials also complained bitterly about the many companies showing their wares at private suites in nearby hotels without bearing the cost of Comdex. Those officials certainly have a point, but they seem to miss the point of making the show affordable. I work in trade shows all the time and am aware of the tremendous costs for an exhibitor, some of which are ridiculously high, such as the cost of freight.

PDA's and accessories were in abundance, as was wireless networking. I saw a small keyboard for the Palm that was interesting (just slightly larger than the Palm itself), but the guy wouldn't work out an offer except to sell them to me in quantity. No thanks. The Wrist PDA caught my eye; it was a PDA in the form of a wristwatch, using the Palm OS. Take a look at <<http://www.abacuswatches.com>>. Looks like the ultimate in data portability.

The Tablet PC was also in high profile at Comdex, but was not very popular among attendees. I was impressed by the dual screen laptop

that I saw. You heard correctly, two screens for your laptop; the keyboard was lying there separate with the laptop sitting on its side folded open <<http://www.dualscreen.com>>. Mitsumi is introducing a floppy drive that also contains three other slots for plugging in your memory cards, and it will read them direct, to be introduced soon. Mitsumi also displayed their Parrot shaped PDA that retrieves e-mail, alerts users to new messages, reads messages aloud, and reminds users of appointments. Don't know if it needs crackers or not <<http://www.pc-mascot.com>>. The USB (solid state) drives, about the size of a cigarette lighter, were all over the place, and some media people even got one in their press kits. I never struck gold there, but one company promised me a deal on them. We'll see. I heard that one last year.

Toshiba was showing their new 63" digital flat screen display, which was very impressive, to be introduced in a month or so. Others had their own new large screens, and some were just as bright while not being gas plasma. Many people, including myself, do not like the new aspect ratio (width to height, 16 x 9) of the new high definition displays, but it looks like they will cram it down our throat anyway. How about CyberLock's line of cylinder locks that can be programmed and can keep track of their usage without the user's knowledge. Great product <<http://www.videx.com>>.

A booth was selling Nisis digital cameras (Pocket DV2) <<http://www.nisis.com>> that would take both stills and AVIs. It was small, and stills could be 1280 x 1024 or 640 x 480 pixels, while an AVI would be 320 x

240 pixels. It could also be used for a PC cam, and there were other features. I decided that for \$120 I'd take a chance. He was selling them as fast as he could get them out of the case and write them up.

DVD was everywhere in all forms, both hardware and software, too numerous to mention, even replicators. However, there are still two major camps, each saying theirs is the best. There was almost no Linux there (I only saw United <<http://www.unitedlinux.com>>), but there was a small open source two-day show called ApacheCon at Alexis Park Resort. I didn't find out soon enough to go.

For people with pets there was the iSeePet by AlphaOmega Soft. It makes it possible to provide for your pet when you are away from home. In other words, at the office you just stop your work briefly and connect to the Internet. Then you can take a look at your pet and push the button to give the pet a small or large dinner. I'm sure that little break would pick up many people's day <<http://www.iseepet.com>>.

I'm out of space, but I've tried to mention items that others probably would not write about. I also have one of the order forms for Comdex CDs and videos. There was much more, but enough of this dribble, let's look into the two deals.

Still Good

The Gear Software deal is still good for January. For this DealsGuy special, go to <<http://www.gearsoftware.com>> and look for the DealsGuy link on their Home Page. The coupon code is "Click." The keyboard offer from Man and Machine for free shipping is good until January 15. Visit <<http://www.man-machine.com>> and use the code "Click."

How About A Backup For Your AntiVirus Protection!

That's right, many still accidentally trigger a virus, and quicker than the wink of an eye, it goes into your address book and merrily e-mails itself to all your friends. That is, if you are using Outlook or Outlook Express and have not installed the patches, and perhaps even then. What's that, you've been meaning to do just that "when you have time!" The same with updating your AntiVirus? Sure!! Viralock is used in conjunction with whatever antivirus software you are using. Its job is to allow the virus NO escape from an infected computer. To reiterate: while traditional antivirus products work mainly to PREVENT a virus intrusion, Viralock works seamlessly beside your normal AV to prevent all viruses, known or unknown, from getting out of your computer to infect your friends, which would be very embarrassing.

It does this by encrypting the e-mail addresses found in popular e-mail programs such as MS Outlook and Outlook Express. You may say that your present AV will do the job of preventing you from ever getting an infected computer. Haven't you read that viruses such as some Klez variants can go in and turn off your AV while it does its dirty work? With Viralock, this won't matter since the e-mail addresses in your program will be encrypted to prevent this. Feel better now? Take a look at <<http://www.viralock.com>> for a better explanation.

The normal selling price is \$19.95, but until February 28, 2003, you can buy it for just \$14.95 by getting it at <<http://www.viralock.com/dealsguy>>. Use the coupon code "DealsGuy," if necessary. You can also download a

free version for trial if you prefer. Remember that Viralock is NOT an AV, but is used in addition to your AV protection. Designed mainly for MS Outlook and Outlook Express right now with a Eudora version in the works.

An Interesting Spam Tool.

I saw SpamNet at Comdex, and you can try the beta version free right now until they are finished with the development. We are all sick of spam (except Hormel, of course), and SpamNet is a Microsoft Outlook add-in that stops spam immediately. SpamNet does not delete spam, but only moves it to your Spam folder with just a click of your mouse. Every time a consumer uses the one-click “block” feature to remove spam from the in-box, you also notify the SpamNet community at large. This automatically blocks spam for all other SpamNet consumers. On the other hand, if they think a certain message is NOT spam, they can click an “unblock” button to share their knowledge with the network. It’s sort of like a “community” fighting spam together.

I haven’t studied it to see how all this works, but you can download the beta version from <http://www.cloudmark.com> as well as read up on what it’s all about. I did read just recently, in a UG newsletter, a short write-up by a member who was pretty happy with the service. Check it out. You’ll be surprised at who the co-founder is.

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.

Lockergnome’s Win XP Tips By Chris Pirillo Chief Lockergnomie

Windows Update Transfer Details

Windows Update hasn’t been faring too well lately; it’s caused a few users some unnecessary headaches. It’ll say something along the lines of: “Here, I think you need this patch,” when, in fact, you don’t. Mike Vigneau passed along an interesting tip for those of us who want to know what’s happening when we’re using this particular Microsoft tool.

This tweak has been confirmed with Windows XP and 2000 systems, although it may work in earlier versions of Windows as well. What we’re going to do is set the transfer dialog to “debug” mode. This way, we can keep an eye on what’s happening at each stage in the process. Fire up the Registry editor and fly to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\ SOFTWARE \ Microsoft \ Active Setup. Enter a new String Value and label it: “SteppingMode” (sans quotes).

Edit the String and give it a value of Y. The next time you use Windows Update, its actions should be a little more descriptive. If you ever wish to disable the verbosity, simply switch this

value to N. If you want another way to grab these downloads, consider using the Corporate version of Windows Update (a quick search on Google will provide the appropriate URL).

Driver Queries and Wasted Space

What's the quickest way (in Windows XP) to get a list of the currently loaded drivers (including module names and descriptions)? Get out of the GUI; you're better off at the command line for this tip. Browse to your desktop folder, for simplicity's sake usually found at C:\Documents and Settings \ [Username] \ Desktop). Now, at the command line, enter: "driverquery /V > drivers.txt" (sans quotes). That /V provides a more "verbose" output. Other notable switches include /FO (which formats the output as a table, list, or comma-separated values) and /SI (which provides details about any signed driver).

Open that freshly-created drivers.txt file and you'll be in business. On a more entertaining note, do you remember the music that played when you first started Windows XP? Ya know, the one that sounded like an Enigma tune? If you wanna hear it again, you can find it at C:\WINDOWS\system32\oobe\images\title.wma. Of course, if you want to free up 3 MB worth of space, you can delete it and the intro.wmv file sitting next to it.

Built-in Spell Checker

Quite honestly, there's no excuse for spelling errors anymore. Typos were frequent in the days of the typewriter; misspellings were common in the handwritten letter era. Though, there's virtually no quick way to spell check a word when you're in anything other than a "Microsoft Office Spell Checker" supported application.

Lockergnomie Tom Maenner had issues with the feature in Outlook Express after he upgraded to Windows XP. "I had to locate 'csapi3t1.dl_' on the Windows XP CD and expand it as 'csapi3t1.dll' in this directory: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\Proof. Worked like a charm."

I'm not certain if this will work on every machine, but it's worth trying if the tool isn't operational for you. If you dork up words every other minute, consider turning on the "Spell Check before Sending" feature in your default e-mail client. It's and its, than and then, their and they're, or any other homophone may slip through the cracks. Butt (G) at least you won't look like a total fool—just a parshal (G) one. Even online, credibility counts.

CompactFlash Formatting

Digital Media (the non-Lockergnome kind) is wonderful when it works. Most people use it in their digital camera or PDA (as do I). Transferring data from a portable device to the PC is relatively painless. Lockergnomie Glen Fabian pointed out something recently posted to <COMPACTFLASH.ORG> (the CompactFlash Association): "By default, Windows XP will format any CompactFlash card of 64MB or more with FAT32 format. Digital cameras and other devices use the FAT (FAT16) format and can not operate with a FAT32 formatted card. You should either format your CompactFlash card in your camera or select FAT format to format your CompactFlash card in a Windows XP PC."

Even if you don't use CF media or Windows XP, this is something to keep in mind. And do you need another reason to own a laptop? My Pocket PC

is a Walkman of sorts; I put new MP3s on it every day. However, transferring them via any USB (1.1) connection is slow as molasses.

I picked up a PCMCIA CF adapter for under five bucks a few weeks ago (they're inexpensive to begin with). Trust me, that will speed up the process. Visit PCMCIA.ORG for more information.

Media Access Control

It's no secret that 802.11b networks are not very secure; we've discussed this point at length in the past. When you enable wireless connectivity through your access point, you should filter out non-registered MAC (Media Access Control) addresses if your WAP supports this feature. A MAC address is unique to every network card on the market. Any Wi-Fi device may see your wireless access point, but it won't be able to use the WAP unless its MAC address matches the (manually entered) filter. Nice, huh?

Okay, so how do you determine a network card's MAC address? Either use WINIPCFG or IPCONFIG. You're looking for a hexadecimal string – twelve digits long (six sections of two hex characters each). This is easy to find when you're on your own machine, but what about those connected to your network?

As your home network expands, this information will become increasingly important. You could use your router's DHCP table to view the addresses, or you could use Windows XP's GETMAC command line utility (also available as a free Windows 2000 Resource Kit download).

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Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. Chris Pirillo developed Lockergnome, a series of e-mail publications delivered weekly to over 250,000 people. His best-selling book has been recognized as the Bible of E-mail Publishing. Chris also hosts a daily TechTV and weekly radio show. He is the Windows columnist for Smart Computing's Computer Power User magazine and also is the content coordinator for the annual Gnomedex technology conference. Visit him at www.Lockergnome.com.



Actual Lockergnomie Tips Book

Have Yahoo Mail? Make it Usable By Gabe Kingsley, PIBMUG's San Francisco Special Correspondent

Quick quiz: True or false—a Yahoo mail account's main purpose is to be a spam accumulator. It's certainly true provided you don't use their powerful filtering tools.

If you already have a Yahoo account, jump right in. Otherwise visit www.Yahoo.com, click on "Sign Up" (under "Personal Assistant"), and you'll be ready to go. Tip: give only required personal information. Request notifications or sharing your info is at

your own risk (although you can always edit your personal settings later).

Once the account is established, click on “Mail” on the <Yahoo.com> home page. Sign in, select “Mail Options” on the right side of the page, and then click “Filters” in the “Management” column.

What’s a Filter?

The concept is easy: a filter is a rule you establish that controls how incoming messages are treated. You can specify conditions for accepting or rejecting mail, and make these rules broad or very specific. Even simple filters can allow mail from a certain source or about a specific subject, or can block mail from other sources or subjects. The most important thing? Filters should be specific to give you the greatest control.

When I set up my Yahoo e-mail account, I used filters to allow only specific From addresses or text in Subject lines, and send all other messages (all non-specified addresses) to the Trash folder, where they get deleted.

First, think about what you want to accomplish. Do you want to include or exclude? What folder do you want messages to go to, Inbox, Trash, or another folder you create?

Creating and Using Filters

Start by selecting “Add Filter” on the “Filters” page. There are a few boxes with drop down lists from which you make selections. You can include or exclude e-mail based on words in certain headings, or text from within the body of a message.

You can configure filters under any of the following headings:
From Header (message originator).
To/CC (you and any other recipients).

Subject (topic of message).

Message Body (word(s) in message).

Select one of the following conditions from the drop down for each of the above that you use:

Contains

Does Not Contain

Begins With

Ends With

Enter appropriate text in the box next to each of the above that you wish to be acted upon.

Message Actions: Move to Folder: InBox - Bulk - Trash - (or any folder of user’s creation). Here are some examples:

Create a rule to accept mail From <nancy@bigfoot.com> and Move to Folder named Inbox (select “Move message to folder” at the bottom).

Reject all mail From the domain <abc.com> and Move to the Folder named Trash.

Allow mail with the phrase, “Family News” in the Subject field and Move to Folder you create named Family (create custom folders on the “Check Mail” page by clicking on “Folders Add” above “Inbox”).

If you subscribe to discussion or special interest groups, or receive news bulletins, you can easily filter mail from them. Do it by creating a Filter that specifies a consistent line of text that appears in the Subject line of their messages, such as “IBM User Group” or “Genealogy,” and send it to the folder of your choice. (The text can even be a unique word or phrase embedded within the Subject field). You can also enable a news message by the originator’s address in the From field.

Note: Make sure your rules do not conflict. You may enable messages from a source by its return address that also

contains text in the Subject field that you block for another. In the case of such conflicts, use multiple conditions in the filter, such as From a specific address and with specific text in the Subject field.

An Easy Filter Trick

I find it easiest to create and track individual rules for all the messages I wish to move to a specific folder. That way if you cancel a subscription or wish to make a change to a rule, you can simply delete or edit the individual filter.

However, if simplicity is what you prefer, you can group your “allowable” Filters into one list of originators or certain subjects. This tells Yahoo to send everything to the Trash folder that does not meet specific criteria in the Subject field (such as: If Subject does not contain “broad_band,” or “Infoworld,” or “Brian Livingston,” or “Woody’s,” or “Briefing,” then move the message to Trash.)

Note that the Boolean (logical) operator “or” must appear between multiple items that are to receive the same treatment, or the syntax will not be correct, and the filter will fail to work. This must be done manually, as the Yahoo filter mechanism will not do this for you. I also created individual filters for each of those originators or subject lines to send to the inbox.

The Filter creation tools are very easy to use and should be familiar to anyone who has used standard Windows pick lists and drop downs. But, if by chance you should make a mistake, you can edit a filter or delete it and then recreate it. After the first two or three, you will feel quite comfortable and should be able to create them with ease.

Helper Programs

A serious limitation of a Yahoo mail account is that you must be online and interactive to use it. (How else can they show you those ads?) That means you must visit their web site in-person, sign in (or let the Yahoo cookie recognize you) to access your e-mail account. Fortunately, there is a terrific free program that eliminates this inconvenience. The utility is YahooPOPs, and it lets you retrieve your Yahoo mail remotely using your current e-mail client program (see list below). Download it from <<http://yahoopops.sourceforge.net>> (note the “Download” link in the upper-right).

This program is tiny, installs in an instant, and is compatible across almost all versions of Windows. The authors host a discussion group and offer support at the site, so check it out for tips and assistance. As Yahoo makes changes to their mail interface, the authors also make updates available to accommodate them. The program comes with a file named HowTo.txt that explains it all and makes it a snap to configure. Something I really like is that it can be set to delete the contents of the Trash folder at Yahoo, saving you the need to do so.

Before you install YahooPOPs, you may want to read some of the most recent conversation in the discussion group for tips. Once you have the utility installed, right mouse click their icon in the system tray, select “Configure,” and check out the easy-to-grok options.

You must also create a new account for your Yahoo account in your existing e-mail program. This is done on the same config screen as you set it up for your current e-mail servers.

YahooPOPs works great (and it's a keeper)!

YahooPOPs supports most current e-mail clients, including Calypso 2.x, Eudora, FoxMail, Incredimail, Lotus Notes R6, Outlook Express, 2000, and XP, Mozilla and Netscape Mail, Pegasus, and The Bat.

Sending Yahoo Mail Remotely

Now that you can retrieve your mail without being online and visiting the Yahoo.com website, how do you send e-mail with your Yahoo.com return address? Simple! When you create your account for Yahoo.com within your own e-mail client program, use your ISP's SMTP server address in the proper field, near where you specify the server address for YahooPOPs (explained in the YahooPOPs HowTo.txt file).

When entering the return address to be shown on outbound mail, use your Yahoo name <yourname@yahoo.com>. Mail sent using this account would show your Yahoo.com return address, even though it was mailed through your ISP's SMTP server.

Note: If someone wants to determine the originator of an e-mail, they can read details of the Internet mail header, but for general purposes this works just fine. Warning: If you are using an alias address behind which you do not wish to be known or that you do not want linked to your main ISP e-mail account, do not use this method.

In Addition ... and Finally!

In conjunction with my Outlook e-mail program and Yahoo account, I also use a very powerful little program called Mail Washer, which helps manage mail from any source. It offers its own built-in "Friends List" and "Black List" to allow wanted or block unwanted

sources of mail, even mail received through your ISP mail account. MailWasher even comes with built-in filters to block mail from known sources of spam around the world.

The author asks for (but does not require) an unspecified donation for use of his program. The difference between the registered and non-registered versions is a small block of advertising that appears at the top of the window. I recommend that you try it at <www.mailwasher.net>. If you love it, send along a few bucks and use it guilt-free.

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Guerilla Strategies For eBay Buying And Selling

Bass Shows You How To Take Advantage Of eBay's Loopholes and Trapdoors

Everyone's heard of eBay, even my Aunt Blossom, my only relative without a PC. I'm guessing many of you buy from eBay but haven't had the nerve to sell.

Well, folks, I've been buying and selling on eBay for about a year, much of the time with great success. Over time, I've accumulated a few iron-clad strategies and a couple of rules, things that have helped me prevent getting burned either as a buyer or seller.

Fair warning: at least two tips might rub you wrong; some of you might call them unethical. I'll let you decide what's right for you.

Do the Diligence

Like everything in life, in order to be successful with eBay, you need to do your home work. Whether you're buying or selling, spend lots of time examining similar products on eBay.

My rule is to examine the price and condition of at least 20 items from at least five different sellers. If it's a high-ticket item (a set of expensive, custom-made GNP speakers, for instance), I also want to track the day and time of day when other high-end speakers sell. That way I have a good feel both for pricing and when to put my speakers up for sale.

eBay provides flexible—and powerful—searching tools. When searching for an item, use an assortment of spellings. For instance, I was looking for a charcoal barbeque, so I searched on BBQ, barbecue, barbeque, bar-be-que, b-b-q, and grill. To hone in on the right BBQ, I modified the search to ignore things I wasn't interested in seeing. Placing a minus sign in front of each of following words eliminated them completely: gas, propane, indoor, book, tongs, and smokeless.

What may not seem obvious are eBay's tremendous tracking tools. Before I sell a product, I'll watch dozens of items using the Bidding / Watching tab portion of "my eBay."

I also have a dozen searches saved within the Favorites tab.

A Seller's Market

Ready for some eBay sacrilege? I think you're better off selling on eBay rather than buying. Sure, there are exceptions, lots of them. You might be looking for something unique, an item you just can't get elsewhere (and willing to pay the price). For instance, I really, really, needed a CPU for an old Gateway Destination and I found it on eBay – and at a decent price.

My take? Just because it's up for auction on eBay, it doesn't mean it's going to sell at a bargain price.

But overall sellers are having a field day because there's real excitement bidding, something that often pushes up the price. For instance, not long ago I was looking for a specific Sony DVD player and watched a dozen eBay bids. I couldn't believe what I was seeing: The lowest auction ended at \$130 plus \$22 shipping; the highest at \$140 and \$21 shipping. The price at Crutchfield, a big online discounter? \$135 with free shipping. (Sorry, you've got to do the math yourself.)

The message? Check outside of eBay for a pricing reality check.

Gimmie Some Feedback!

Everyone knows to check a seller's feedback, right? What's important is you need to do more than just scan the feedback, but pay close attention to the details.

The letter "B" and "S" at the right side of each feedback listing signifies whether the person was a buyer or seller. If you're a buyer, the feedback about the person's buying behavior, while not irrelevant, isn't as critical as his seller feedback. Make sure to scroll through at least five pages of feedback,

especially if you're buying a really high-ticket item.

You can also get a better sense of a buyer or seller's attitude by viewing their feedback about others. Head for their feedback page and click on the "Feedback About Others" link.

Ebay Trick One

I discovered this strategy by accident and now use it regularly.

I was thinking about selling my car, a '95 Volvo, through eBay. I watched dozens of auto sales, and the majority were successful. Yet it was a \$6000 sale so I was getting cold feet. I decided to contact potential buyers, the people listed in the Bid History area of the auction page.

My goal was to find out what motivated them to buy and what dissuaded them from bidding on the car more than once. What I got was an enormous amount of valuable info. For instance, one guy said, "I only will bid on a car that has an eBay warranty on it for major problems." Another explained "Start the bidding at \$1500 in order to just get serious buyers. Nothing annoys me more than someone who starts bidding at \$1.00 on a 2001 vehicle, especially when they have a buy-it-now price in the \$20K range."

What was more exciting were these questions: "BTW - I've gotta ask...what color & how many miles?", "I feel the urge to ask—what kind of 95 Volvo do you have to sell, color, mileage, options etc.?"

I ended up selling the car locally, from a sign on the car that I parked in the street.

The Second Trick

I built a small pond in the backyard, something to attract birds. I needed a submersible pump and just missed an

auction. I wrote to the seller, asked if he had any more, and bought one at about \$10 less than the price it sold for at auction. I've tried that twice, and both times it's worked out with a successful purchase.

Now reverse the situation. Say you have something you're about to put up for auction. You do your diligence and find a handful of similar items for sale. What's to say that after the auction's ended, you can't contact each of the non-winners (okay, losers—I was trying to be kind) and offer to sell them your item directly.

The truth is I've heard people say these methods are unethical, at least according to eBay's rules. I'm sleeping well, but you'll have to make your own decision.

Listen, I've got to go. I just got a page that an auction's about to end and I have to start bidding.

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 his Home Office columns at <<http://snurl.com/homeoffice>> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at <<http://snurl.com/signup>>.



Printer Tip No.1

If a sheet of paper jams in your printer, it is best to pull it out in the same direction as it normally moves through the printer, rather than backwards. Pulling it our backwards may mess up some of the sensitive sensors.

Buying a DVD Recorder

By Bob Elgines
elginesz@rraz.net

Well the prices are coming down, now under \$300 and as low as \$220, for a DVD recorder. The blank disks are now under \$2.50 each in lots of ten or more. But beware, the great decision as to which format is still under debate, DVD-R or DVD+R! If you just wish to make videos, either one should work in most DVD players made after the year 2000, but not all. Cheaper DVDR disks and players will not work.

Support out there is very weak to almost NONE! Much time needs to be invested, like 4 to 10 hours to make a 2 hour video DVD, during which several programs require you to sit in front of your computer.

Most of the software is over-priced and does not work without many problems and no support, like "Video Studio 6" by Cyber. The best so far has been "MyDVD" by Sonic. Some of the suggestions listed below came from them.

The best input devices are: "USB Instant DVD" by ADS (\$160), "Bungee DVD" by Pinnacle (\$150), "DCS 100" (\$170), and "DCS 200" by Dazzle (\$230). They all come with software that has individual problems, and advertise "Fast, Easy & Fun." Boy, that is a huge JOKE! It's "Slow, Hard, & Will Drive You Nuts."

If you cannot handle all of the suggestions (really necessary evils) below, then don't get involved. I became one of their guinea pigs, and I am about to throw it all in the circle file and call it a lost cause.

My ASUS computer is an Intel P3 @ 866MHz, 256MB RAM @ 133MHz, 60GB Hard Drive @ 7200rpm ATA100, ATI Radeon 32MB video card, with the "USB Instant DVD" input device. I tried out the DAZZLE equipment (but it had big noise problems, and they had NO support at all), and the VIVASTAR (LF311) DVD-R recorder. I have tried two operating systems, the Win '98SE and Win'ME and saw no difference, so I stuck with to Win'98SE.

For Windows '98 -'XP users, start off with these suggestions on getting ready to record a DVD:

- *Install at least 256 MB of RAM.
- *Disable the Screen Saver.
- *Disable the Turn off Hard Disks option.
- *Disable the Hibernation option.
- *Disable the Network Time Server (Win'XP).
- *Disable Text to Speech (Win'XP).
- *Disable any scheduled tasks (for example, virus scan).
- *Do not increase Virtual Memory beyond Windows' recommended setting.
- *Close any other running applications.
- *Do not copy any large files while capturing.
- *Do not allow any remote activities, such as PC Anywhere or Timbuktu connections.
- *Have your hard drives formatted to NTFS (which has no files size limitations, Win'XP).
- *Have at least 21 gigs available on a single drive.
- *Have the latest drivers for the following: DVDROM, burner, CD-ROM and burner.
- *Have your hard drives defragmented.
- *In particular, while capturing video, do not use your PC for any other activity. Video capture requires all

your PC's processing power, and any action such as inserting a disc or receiving e-mail may cause errors in the captured video files.

- *Have your monitor resolution set to 1024x768, 16 or 32 bit color.
- *You must run ASPI driver 4.6. No higher, no lower. If you are unsure, you can go here to find out and/or download the appropriate driver <<http://aspi.radified.com>>.
- *Make sure you are not running your machine/session on a network or RAID configuration.
- *Make sure you have the latest version DirectX (a must), WMP (a must).
- *If your "Input digital device" is on USB, then remove all other USB external equipment.
- *You may also find it beneficial to enable DMA for all your drives.

There are DVD-RAM and DVD+RAM which allow you to save up to 9.6GB of data, but hard drives are much cheaper, like 20GB for \$69.00 or lower. It is just not FAST and EASY, as they have stated in their advertising!

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.

Printer Tip No. 2

It's best to turn your printer off using the button on the printer before cutting the power. That lets the printer do its normal shutdown sequence, just like your computer.

Testing OCR Karl Rehak Las Vegas PCUG

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is used to convert an existing document, say a scanned page, to a document that is editable. OCR software has been around for many years. Anyone who has had a need to capture an existing document for revision knows the value in having this kind of product to remove much of the burden.

A little background of my own experience with OCR software might be in order before beginning. I have been a user of this kind of software for over five years. Starting with the light versions of OCR products with my first scanner, followed by two releases of TextBridge. This is my second experience with OmniPage Pro. The first OmniPage product I used was release 10. The latest version is number 12, but for this exercise in testing I used OmniPage Pro 11. OmniPage Pro release 11 was the first release since Caere was bought and ScanSoft merged their OmniPage OCR program into the TextBridge product. Needless to say, and based on my past use of OCR products, I was very interested to see what has been brought to the scene.

The overall design of the main OmniPage Pro OCR process is built upon the age-old concept of what computing really is. The steps are Input, Process, and Output – a simple concept. Each of those processes can be broadly segregated into three different approaches: They can be done manually, automatically, or described through a wizard. I tried each method as I tested and found that they are very similar and easy to learn and use. It takes no

additional effort to move from one approach to another.

The input describes the source of the OCR; it can be a black and white, grayscale, or color document. It can also be a computer file. Introduced with this release was a scanable file type, Acrobat files. More on the PDF scanning ability will be covered later.

The process part of the three elements allows the user to describe what he or she wants as a result. Among the choices are: to preserve the page structure of the source, scan it as a single continuous column of information, include or exclude tables, or to output to a spreadsheet format. The program also recognizes over 100 different languages; however, Chinese, Japanese and Hebrew are not among them.

Finally, the output function allows the user to save the information as a file for a word processor or other computer program, output to mail, or copy the output to the clipboard. OmniPage also has another interesting output available—speech, which I won't discuss here.

My general opinion of OCR software is that while it removes most of the effort in capturing printed documents, the OCR process is in itself a very burdensome activity. The software is only capable of doing so much of the effort, and any ambiguity in the OCR process requires interpretation that only a human being is capable of providing. As a result I haven't approached an OCR session with delight or as being an activity that would be personally rewarding. In addition, my OCR sessions are generally infrequent and usually come in bursts that can range from several hours to several days. This means that

the more accurate an OCR program is, the easier will be my brief but intense excursions into their use. The bottom line measure of the value of a quality OCR product is end user productivity. As the quality of OCR products improves, and the interpretation of a document's content becomes more and more a function of the computer's ability to interpret information rather than the time spent to have a human being interpret and make decisions, the higher the productivity. That is, in the final analysis, all that matters.

The Test Begins

The first test was done primarily to allow me to gain knowledge and confidence in the use of OmniPage 11. I read the instruction manual and reviewer's notes and formulated a test plan to put the product through its paces. But first I had to know what capability was in the software. For this first test I used the documents out of the OmniPage box. The documents are very legible and of a standard-size font, about 12 point Ariel. I rated each test based on the overall quality and legibility of the source document, a 10 is a very easy document, and a 1 is an extremely poor quality document. These first test documents were quality 10.

The first scans from the manuals went as expected. It interpreted everything with only three suspect words in three pages of scanning. A word with a registration mark (the circle R) next to it is an example of a suspect word. It guessed correctly, and I only had to confirm the program's choice. The interpret rating was 100%, and again, the document type was a 10.

Test Two

All right, the party's over; time to see just what this program can do. For

the second test I selected a sampling of a legal document, reproduced many, many times and originally bound in a plastic binder with half inch slots, later converted to three-hole punched paper. The document, because of numerous copies over the years, was heavily speckled. I called it the document from hell. This is characteristic of many of the scans I had done in the past and where the personal productivity factor went in the dumper. Lots of interpretation needed, and in the older OCR programs the remnants of holes and slots were interpreted as characters. The documents also had to be cleaned of speckles and marks manually with older OCR programs. Further the document had a filing number stamped on it of a different size and slant. Document quality 2 at best on my scale, I decided to name this part of the test 'Extreme Scanning.'

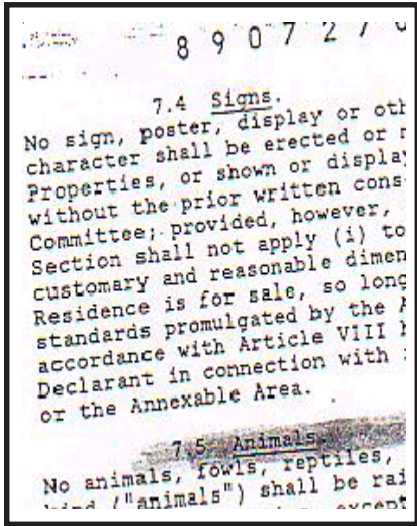


Fig. 1 Legal Document

Four pages were scanned, and the overall scan accuracy was 93.93%. On the first page it highlighted 17 words.

Of the selections, it had guessed correctly 15 times, and I had only to confirm the choice. I had to select from a provided list of choices twice, and the correct words were in the list.

I'm convinced that lawyers invent words so nobody knows what they are talking about. The net in the OCR test was that the document was loaded with legalese, and this product flew through the legal words just fine.

The additional pages had slightly less selections to decide. The parts of the documents that contained remnants of holes and slots were passed over by the program; no need to clean them beforehand or eliminate wrong interpretations on the part of OmniPage.

It's beginning to get too easy for this program, so for the final scan of the legal document I decided to place it in the scanner at about a 10 degree angle. It scanned fine. The program automatically aligns the text. When I took the document off of the scanner I realized I had also put it in upside down. The program had also fixed that.

At this point the effect on my overall productivity in the OCR area looked great. No more speckle and hole removal or spending countless hours interpreting information. But I figured there had to be one more test I could do.

Test Three

I had achieved my goal of watching the program pass the extreme scanning test, but what else would put it to the test after that? Looking over my bookshelf I saw an old copy of the Bible. The pages are 4 1/2 inches wide and 7 1/2 inches long; the font was too small for me to measure but was about 7 point or less. Lots of unusual words, numbered verses, and italicized footnotes. I placed it on the scanner at a 10-degree angle

and hit the scan button. The illustration, "Interpreting the Bible" shows what the program saw. The result was 100% accuracy, 13 suspect words and no changes. On the scale of document quality I put it at about a 6.

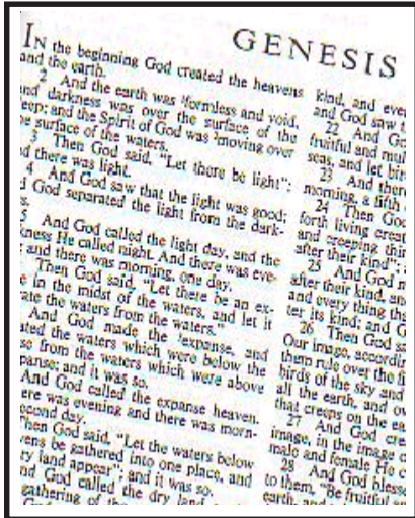


Figure 2 Interpreting The Bible

I'm amazed at this performance, and now we're in bonus territory in our extreme scanning test.

The Bonus Round

Added to the program with this OmniPage Pro 11 is the ability to OCR Acrobat files. To do this test I found a 'readme' file in my Acrobat folder and scanned it in. It is a 21-page file, and all 11,000+ words were input at 100% accuracy with 64 suspect words. Again, the registration symbol and similar characters required confirmation that the interpretation was correct. No changes had to be made.

Conclusion

The tests show that this OCR product matched its promise. The product is more accurate than previous releases, and as each release improves accuracy,

the user productivity soars. What used to take 10 hours of effort can now be done in 1 hour. The more complex the document and the poorer the condition the more work the program will take on, relieving much of the effort of capturing documents. I would estimate that productivity improvements of an order of magnitude over previous releases can be realized. Tests like these will show it. The program test was also a lot of fun to do.

Karl Rehak is currently a Director with the Las Vegas PC User Group, Inc., a non-profit organization. He served two years as President. Semi-retired as a consultant, he has over 45 years of professional experience in computers and information processing. The article was first published in "The Bytes of Las Vegas," newsletter of the LVPCUG.

COMDEX FALL 2002

**By Bob Clyne
SEMCO**

They say that getting there is half the fun. I don't know about half, but the trip to Las Vegas for Comdex was fun. I decided to drive this year in order to avoid the security hassle at the airports. I saw the harassment that some other passengers were subjected to last year, and from what I have heard, it has gotten much worse since then. Most passengers get through with only a moderate amount of harassment, but if you get selected for additional harassment, there is no limit. The really sad part is that I don't think anything they are doing would seriously inconvenience the terrorists.

I had never driven through the

Rocky Mountains before, and I found the scenery awesome. I took four days driving out because I wanted to arrive in Las Vegas before 3 o'clock on Friday, November 15th, and I wanted to do some sight seeing on the way. The trip went smoothly with a cooler of Coca Cola on the right floor, my laptop with DeLorme Street Atlas USA 2003 on the right seat, and the GPS in the back window. The GPS tracked my every move through the whole trip and showed where I was on the map on the screen. The voice navigation worked most of the way until Street Atlas got confused and said I was in Las Vegas while I was still on I-70 in Utah. The map kept tracking correctly, but the voice navigation quit because it thought I was at my destination. I had a similar problem on the return trip when Street Atlas said I was within a few miles of Yale when I was still on I-94 in Indiana. I made the trip back in three days without any strain. As long as I was supplied with Coke and the car was supplied with gasoline, we both did fine.

Saturday and Sunday were occupied with APCUG events designed to help user group leaders do a better job. There were also old friends to get reacquainted with and some new friends to make among the user group people there, as well as some vendor sponsored meals and product presentations. Among those present were Bob Click, a former Michigan resident, who writes the Deals Column, and his wife. We had several enjoyable dinners together.

Almost from the time I arrived in Las Vegas, I heard talk about Key3Media Group, the company that owns and runs Comdex, being in serious financial trouble. I don't think

Key3Media's problems affected this year's Comdex, but they cast some doubt on its future. I think there will be a Comdex in 2003 but I don't know what it will be like.

Monday was the start of Comdex itself. Comdex has been getting smaller and smaller for several years now, and this year was no exception. Except for some suites and press conferences in the Hilton next door, the entire show, including registration and press facilities, was in the North and Central Halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) with some room left over. LVCC renamed the old South Hall to Central Hall when they added a new building, which contains the new South Hall. Comdex is still big, but it is only a shadow of its former self. The trend toward companies having off-site suites instead of show floor booths continued. At least the metal detectors that everyone had to go through last year were gone.

There were USB solid state drives from several vendors at the show. These are becoming more reasonably priced in sizes up to 256 MB. These solid state, flash memory, drives are very small and much more rugged than a hard drive but are still much smaller in capacity and higher in price than a hard drive. Some support USB 2.0, but many were based on the older USB 1.1 specification. They are a handy way to store a file away from the computer and to take files from one computer to another. They are compatible with both Windows and Mac.

UnitedLinux was at the show and held a press conference to announce the release of their Version 1.0. UnitedLinux is a partnership, which includes Conectiva, SCO Group, SuSE,

Linux AG, and Turbolinux. HP and IBM sponsored the launch event. Each of the partners will use the same core Linux distribution, and each company will then bundle their own value added products and service for sale. The announced purpose of UnitedLinux is to simplify the certification of hardware and applications and provide a more orderly release of updates and patches. (I wonder if that will slow the release of security patches.) I think they also expect to gain a competitive advantage over other companies and organizations distributing Linux.

The DVD+RW Alliance had a large booth, which was sub-divided into stations for many of the member companies. DVD+R/+RW is one (or two depending in how you look at it) of the formats that are competing for dominance in the controversial DVD writable and re-writable arena.

Yamaha is going to release a DVD+R/+RW drive in the first quarter of 2003. If I remember correctly, it will support a 4X write speed and a 2.4X re-write speed. It will also do CD-RW. Since Yamaha has a good reputation for CD-RW drives, this should be worth watching for. I wish I could remember more details.

HP is scheduled to announce their DVD300 series of DVD+R/+RW drives on January 7, 2003. This drive will have a DVD write speed of 4X and a re-write speed of 2.4X, with CD-RW speeds of 16X write, 10X re-write, and 40X read speed. The drive will ship with ARCSOFT Showbiz software and is expected to have a street price of about \$299 for the internal model and \$399 for the external Firewire, USB 2.0 model. The external model is not expected to ship until early February. The drive will not

be Mt. Rainier compliant and is not based on the Philips reference design. HP will not manufacture the drive mechanism themselves, but would not say who will manufacture it.

Voyetra Turtle Beach, who are known for high quality sound boards, were displaying their AudioTron digital music player. This device attaches to your home audio system and feeds audio from your PC or streaming Internet Radio into your audio system. The transfer of the music can be initiated from either the computer or the AudioTron. Accepted audio file formats include MP3, Unsecure Windows Media (WMA), and WAV. You can set up playlists on the device. Transfer to the device can be via 10BaseT Ethernet running TCP/IP or HPNA (Phoneline) 2.0. The device has both analog output and optical S/PDIF output to the sound system and includes a remote control. For more information see <<http://www.turtle-beach.com>>. Missing is WiFi support, but I would expect devices from Turtle Beach and/or others to have that feature in the near future.

Linksys had a new line of routers and access points that support 802.11g wireless. This is a new standard; in fact, it is so new that the standard has not been ratified yet. Linksys apparently believes that they can accommodate any last minute changes with firmware updates. The 802.11g specification uses the same 2.4 GHz band as 802.11b, but has data rates of up to 54 Mbs. It has a range similar to 802.11b. Linksys's 802.11g equipment will also operate with 802.11b equipment at the 802.11b speeds of up to 11 Mbps, but it is not compatible with 802.11a. Linksys also has some dual band 802.11a and

802.11b equipment, but no equipment that covers all three standards. These units should be shipping now. See <http://www.linksys.com> for further information.

There were many large flat panel displays. Most of these were plasma displays, but there were a few large LCD displays. The ones over 30" diagonal are still very expensive, and the ones over 40" diagonal even more outrageously expensive, but they are half or less what they were a year or two ago for the same or a larger size.

Numerous companies were selling small cheap digital cameras. Some of these might be useful for clandestine surveillance work. Other, not quite so small, digital cameras appeared to be in the old box Brownie camera class, but digital. There were better cameras there, but they were more expensive.

Several companies had water-cooling units for CPU chips and some of the other hot running components. These keep the component temperatures down and also reduce the noise level, since they use larger but slower turning fans than other heat sinks. These brands included Thermaltake, Koolance, and Alpha and Omega. TherMagic <http://www.thermagic.com> had a cooler with all the parts except the tubing and the CPU cooling block in a unit that would mount where you would normally mount a rear case fan. It was about 8" long and used a fan on each end in a push-pull configuration. It even had temperature-controlled speed on the pusher fan.

ActiveCool had a Peltier Effect cooling unit that had an active controller to rapidly adjust the cooling unit in response to changes in the CPU temperature. The concept was to keep

the CPU temperature as constant as possible to minimize thermal stresses when the processor load changed. The control unit occupied a PCI slot and required its own AC power cord.

There was a neat device called a Segway Human Transporter <http://www.segway.com> at the show that consisted of two wheels, one on each side, with a platform between and a vertical handle in front. The user stood on the platform and leaned forward or back to make it go. Steering was done via the handlebars on a front column. It looked great, and I would have liked to have had a ride, but the line was long, and I heard that the wait was about 45 minutes. I did not want to try it that badly. I don't know how they maintained the balance, but it seemed to work, and the units appeared to be quite maneuverable. It looked like a cool but expensive (about \$4950) toy, but beyond that I think it is a solution looking for a problem. It did not look to me like they would mix well with either pedestrians or vehicles. They looked like they could cause significant damage if they contacted a pedestrian, and I don't know how much of a jostle in a crowd it would take to knock over Segway and rider. Besides, where would you park the darn thing? Other people seem to think the things have a future. Time will tell.

There were a lot of other items at the show, but you will have to get the information about them from other writers or, better still, go yourself next year. I am planning on driving back out to Las Vegas for the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in January. CES is now much bigger than Comdex. It is supposed to occupy the North and Central Halls and two floors of the new South Hall of the LVCC.

Pocket Pleasures

By John Blasdell

Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

One piece or two? Not swimsuits, handheld computers. You wouldn't want to carry an external modem for your notebook PC. Until recently, you had to carry a separate wireless modem or a cable to connect your wireless phone and PDA. Then came the first combination units with the styling and weight of a brick. The newest units are smaller, lighter, and you don't have to configure a PDA and phone to talk to each other. Accessories add to the cost, size, and weight you must carry. Instead of buying and carrying accessories for two units, you can reduce the bulk and carry accessories for one combination PDA/phone. Sounds like the perfect match? Maybe not.

Consider the technologies involved for both the phone and PDA. You may use your cell phone as a modem, but it's much more than a modem. Cell phones and handheld computers are two different things, at two different stages of development, and are evolving at different rates. Many PDA/phone hybrids remind me of cartoon characters that are part one animal, part another. Unfortunately, the cartoon critters perform better than some phone/PDA combinations.

Until recently, most wireless data (not voice) used CDPD (Cellular Digital Packet Data). CDPD is the original wireless IP packet data standard; the first commercial service was launched in 1995. No combo units

use CDPD, but OmniSky and other services offer CDPD for wireless notebooks, PocketPCs, and Palms. The actual CDPD service in the Pittsburgh area is provided by AT&T Wireless and Verizon Wireless; you can purchase the service directly from them or resellers such as OmniSky, now EarthLink Wireless. I prepay OmniSky/EarthLink \$360 per year, instead of paying \$40 or more monthly. CDPD has a maximum data rate of 19.2 kbps; however, some of this capacity is used for error correction and system overhead. The data throughput varies, but is usually in the range of 10 kbps to 15 kbps. Two factors limit your use of CDPD: 1) Coverage is good in a few metro areas, but spotty nationwide (see map @ <http://earthlink.omnisky.com/>). 2) Since the speed is limited, wireless carriers are promoting their newer data networks. AT&T Wireless has announced plans to stop selling CDPD in the near future and dismantle their existing CDPD network in 2004.

When choosing a handheld computer, consider the features and drawbacks of each PDA operating system. The main choices are PalmOS and three similar versions of WindowsCE. The OS differences are narrowing. Faced with poor sales, Microsoft tried to make their interface more "Palm-like" when they designed PocketPC 2002. Palm recently introduced a new version of their operating system, OS5, that has many additional features, such as better multimedia support and security. If you could magically pull your desktop computer out of your shirt pocket, what would you do with it? For instance, I do a lot of writing on my PDAs, but

have no interest in playing music files. I manage my e-mail and check web sites (mostly news, weather, airline, and PDA sites). I'm intrigued by a few strategy games, but have never had the time to download and play them. Ask others how they use their PDAs, read magazines and web sites devoted to handheld computing, and develop a list of things you want to do and features you expect.

The proper operating system—proper for you—is important because it determines the exact software you can use. If you buy a handheld because it's great at one task, such as e-mail, then later buy another unit for other tasks ... that defeats the purpose and idea of a "Swiss Army Knife" handheld computer/phone. The Microsoft Smartphone OS omits Pocket Word and Pocket Excel, so you'd likely need to carry another handheld. More weight, accessories, and over \$1,000 tied up in two small pieces of delicate equipment! And don't believe the sales pitches from either Microsoft or Palm: they both bend reality in print and online ads, making the other product appear almost useless.

You may be surprised to find that the largest cell phone manufacturers don't make a Smartphone 2002 or PalmOS phone. Nokia, Motorola, and others are developing their own software or use Symbian, an alternative OS.

You may decide on a particular OS, even a great hybrid PDA/phone, but here's the big variable. Cell phones and PDA/phone combos available now work with one specific wireless carrier. The first two Handspring Treos only work with T-Mobile, formerly known as VoiceStream. The newest Treo works

only with Sprint PCS. AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile each have a specific PocketPC/phone, and so on. Do the wireless carriers make it easy to compare service and rate plans? Here's an example. Long distance plans for your home and business telephones are everywhere. The advertised price per minute usually sounds low, but is that what you really pay? The advertised price is probably the off-peak interstate rate. What is the weekday interstate rate? The in-state Inter-LATA rates? The Intra-LATA rates? What are the different rate periods? The monthly service fee? Is this with a carrier, rebiller, or sales agency? Do you know all the specifics of your long distance plan? If you think long distance plans are confusing, wait until you look at all the variables with a combination PDA/phone! Another example is the choice between Windows, Linux, and Mac. Suppose you found that in your neighborhood Windows only worked with dial-up Internet access, Linux only worked with cable modems, and Macs with broadband?

Each wireless carrier has a different local and national "footprint." AT&T just introduced a new GSM network for voice and data, but coverage on their new network is very limited (their old TDMA digital network remains in place). Nextel, T-Mobile, and Sprint offer good coverage in some metro areas, but little service out where cows outnumber people. Verizon Wireless currently has the best national coverage. Most carriers have "roaming" agreements with other carriers, but roaming airtime usually costs extra. If you spend all or most time in one area, local coverage is important, but do you also spend time at a lake, campground,

or relative's house? Check the maps for coverage. The carriers have brochures showing coverage areas, but the latest coverage maps are available online. I keep brochures showing coverage maps in my glove compartment, so if I find myself somewhere new, and one of my mobile phones doesn't work, I can refer to the coverage map.

I've had 6 cell phones from 4 different wireless carriers in 5+ years. The coverage area and service quality varies from carrier to carrier; they also vary by carrier over time. The usual cycle is something like this: a carrier starts off with limited coverage areas and high rates. They build up their network, offer more features and better pricing, but eliminate some of the reasons you chose that wireless carrier in the first place. Their tech support and customer service are clueless at the beginning, get better over time, then go downhill as their success and volume of customers grows. Same thing with their wireless network. It gets better, then worse, as they add more and more customers. They claim to offer complete coverage in major areas such as Pittsburgh, but I continually lose calls on the Parkway.

Most wireless carriers price data separately from voice minutes. How many megabytes of data are you going to transfer on a monthly basis? It's hard enough to estimate possible voice usage when purchasing your first cell phone; imagine estimating your monthly data usage. Some carriers have an Unlimited Plan, but the cost currently approaches \$100 monthly. Verizon offers 2 networks: connect at 19,200 Baud at no additional fee (just use your voice minutes for data) and their new, high-speed network at an additional charge. I use the lower speed

Verizon network—my plan offers unlimited free voice and data usage at nights and all weekend, so I connect for free during these periods.

$1+3=5$. $1+5=8$. Not "new math" as taught in schools, that's the new math of PDA manufacturers. \$100 cell phone + \$300 PDA = \$500 combination unit. \$100 cell phone + \$500 PDA = \$800 combination unit. You don't save money purchasing a combination unit—you'll likely pay extra. And that's just the beginning of the "bad math." There are many costs with each purchase, but consider two. The initial cost, and the cost to buy the phone or combo unit again if you lose it, break it, or it fails after the warranty period expires. Some wireless carriers, such as Verizon, advertise phones at attractive prices, BUT there's a catch. That price is ONLY available when you activate a new wireless contract or sign up for a new contract at the expiration of your existing contract. If you have a 2-year contract and lose/damage your phone in 5 months or a year, you have to pay the advertised price PLUS \$200 to purchase a new phone or data unit. Other wireless carriers, such as Sprint, will sell you new phones at the advertised price whenever you want; you just pay a service fee to get the new phone programmed and activated. Some carriers offer an optional insurance policy to protect against theft, loss, or damage, but this is another cost, and may or may not pay when tragedy strikes. Several friends and I have experienced this with Nextel; they finally replaced my phone with a refurbished unit for a \$35 fee.

Here's another case of bad math, where $2 + 2 = 3$. Mobile phones come with many features, from built-in

address books to selectable ring-tones. You would think that a PDA/phone combination would have even more phone features, since there is more memory, a better CPU, and a more advanced OS. Amazingly, the phone feature list on some combination units is smaller!

I wrote down a list of features for any new wireless phone I may buy, divided into 2 sections: 1) Must-have features; 2) Desirable, but not mandatory features.

Necessary Features:

1. Data-capable.
2. Long-lasting, replaceable Lithium-Ion or Lithium-polymer battery.
3. Easy to read display showing: 1) Signal strength; 2) Home/Roaming; 3) Battery strength/% remaining/charging/etc.; 4) If voicemail or text message received; 5) Missed Call indicator.
4. Can set to work in "Home" areas only, so no surprise Roaming charges.
5. Phone-book memory for at least 100 stored numbers.
6. One keypress to access voicemail (don't have to dial a number, then enter a password + other keystrokes while driving).
7. Last-number redial by pressing the SEND key again.
8. Call-Forwarding, Call-Waiting and 3-Way-Calling capable (carrier must offer these features).
9. Easy volume adjust for ringer, earpiece, and keypress tones.
10. Can display 10 or more last-dialed numbers, answered calls, and missed calls.
11. Logical, easy-to-remember sequence to enter/edit phone numbers and names in the

phone's memory.

12. Low radiation emission (see chart at <<http://www.zdnet.com/special/stories/wireless/0,10676,2714229,00.html>>).
13. Talk on each phone before purchasing to determine the clearest and best sounding! Some wireless phones sound better than a good landline phone; others sound like a \$4.95 bad bargain.

Desired Features:

1. Speakerphone capable.
2. Voice dialing of frequently used numbers.
3. Resettable timer showing total minutes used per month. Last-call timer & total-minutes-on-phone timers also nice.
4. Alarm (different sound than ring) that can be set for pre-selected time (I don't use this feature any more since I now set alarms on my pocket computers).

Battery life is a factor, especially with a color screen. I have two handheld computers from the same manufacturer. One has a 4-bit mono screen (16 shades of gray), the other has a 16-bit color screen. E-mail is OK on the mono screen, and it's great outdoors in sunlight, but otherwise the color screen wins easily. The color unit gives low-battery warnings after 3 hours of on-time in one day; the mono unit is good for more than twenty hours use over ten days (that's the longest I went without recharging; the mono unit still had 40% battery life left). I use the handheld computers 2-3 hours most days. Some days I rarely use the wireless phones; others days I use them for one, two, or three hours. If you have continual access to an AC or auto outlet, that's great, but you may be on

the move during the day, with little time spent around a power source.

Ergonomics is another factor. I frequently use a cell phone and PDA at the same time. I may be casually chatting with someone while doing an unrelated task on the handheld; I may be referring to a document onscreen that is the topic of the conversation. Either scenario means I can't hold a PDA/phone to my ear. Use a headset, you say. If I'm just listening, they're great, but most headset microphones don't have the fidelity of the microphone in the wireless phone, so it may be hard for the other party to understand me. The headset may be uncomfortable if worn for long periods. My newest cell phone has a speakerphone option, which I use when in the car or where I won't bother other people.

How legal is it to use a cellphone headset while driving? You may remember a couple of years ago when the Pennsylvania State Police were giving tickets to motorists who wore a headset while driving. I called the PA State Police and asked this question. Their response was that it's legal to wear a headset if the headset covers only one ear. The other ear will hopefully hear a horn or other warning sound that may occur.

For PDA input, you have your choice of a tiny keyboard or writing/printing. The little keyboards seem designed for people who, for whatever reason, dislike writing/printing. If you think you'd prefer a keyboard, find a working unit at a local store and spend some time typing away. You'll either get the hang of it, or decide those little keyboards are sized just right for elves, not humans.

The early combo units had no slots to accept Compact Flash, Secure Digital, or other external media cards. Any unit without an expansion slot should be free, or \$25 at most! The most important use of expansion media is to backup your important data. When your unit suffers a fatal brain cramp away from your PC, you need a convenient way to restore your data. Second, sooner or later you'll accumulate data you want to keep with you. Spreadsheets, digital photos, reference documents, e-books, video and audio files—it's only a matter of time until you need to free up memory in the handheld by moving applications and data to storage cards.

I could write a very long article comparing Compact Flash, Secure Digital, and other card formats, but the only real difference is physical size. Purchase an external card reader (\$20–50) for whatever format(s) you use to back up your external media to your computer. My current handhelds use Compact Flash cards. I have an adapter to plug CF cards into my notebook computer's PCMCIA slot, and use Windows Explorer to copy the card contents to an external hard drive I use for backups.

Some PDA/phones can be used as an external modem to connect a notebook or other computer online; some can't. Check the documentation for the particular combo unit you are interested in. Ask a salesperson? You'll probably get the wrong answer. Salespeople, whether at a wireless carrier or computer store, receive minimal training, and barely a mention about wireless data and technical issues. From magazines, web sites, and online forums, where actual us-

ers discuss their experiences, problems and solutions—after you’ve done some research—you’ll likely know more than the salesperson you’re talking with.

As an aside, I keep important phone numbers in both my cell phones and handheld computers. If one unit has a problem, I can retrieve the number from the other hardware and quickly make the call.

The answer to the “perfect device” may lie with Bluetooth. Bluetooth technology uses tiny low-power transceiver chips that enable computers, printers, cell phones, headsets, and other electronic “stuff” to talk to each other within 20–30 feet. If you have a Bluetooth-equipped cell phone and PDA, they can talk with each other. You can buy the best PDA and the best phone, and they will work as one. The cell phone can be in your briefcase or purse; the PDA or other computer accesses the Internet as though a cable connects the two units. The units are “smart,” so they don’t try to print to a headset, for instance. Bluetooth has been in development for years, so it’s not science fiction or an untested technology. As Bluetooth gains popularity, it should show up in many devices. The component cost is only about \$5 extra, but right now you’ll pay a hefty \$\$ penalty in most devices to pay for development costs. Bluetooth isn’t the same as 802.11b or 802.11a. It draws much less current than Wi-Fi, and at present is a better solution for most of us than a one-piece, one-size-doesn’t-fit-all PDA/phone combo.

I won’t say that combination PDA/phones are a bad idea. They’re getting better, and may some day be my handheld of choice. The new Kyocera

7135 and other new combination units look fantastic; just choose carefully so it’s right for you.

The article is reprinted with permission from the November “PACC TALK,” newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club.

Time to Consider a Notebook (Laptop) Computer?

By Ira Wilsker

ira@apcug.org

One of the questions I often have been asked on my weekly radio shows, and e-mails from readers of this column is, “What would be better (for me), a new laptop or a desktop computer?”

A simple review of the Sunday sale-books from the major office supply and electronics stores clearly shows that there is an abundant supply of notebook computers available. Standing in the security lines at the major airports also shows the popularity of notebook computers.

So, which one is better? Desktop or notebook? As I have consistently replied, “What are you going to be using it for?”

If a computer is intended for home or office use, likely in one location for a period of time, a desktop computer is more practical. Usability features, such as a full-size keyboard, large screen monitor, and readily accessible drives, coupled with significantly lower prices for comparable machines, make the desktop the clear choice in this scenario. Another factor is longevity. The average useful life of a desktop computer, according to both personal experience and published reports, is

typically four to six years. Desktop computers are also usually easy and relatively inexpensive to upgrade or repair. The average desktop computer becomes functionally obsolete long before it physically fails.

Notebook computers, commonly called “laptops” by many, have some very strong advantages, compared to desktop computers, as well as some very strong disadvantages. The obvious advantage of a notebook computer is portability. At Golden Triangle PC Club meetings, when I would have to present, I would often have to drag my desktop from home to the meeting place; it was heavy, bulky, and easy to break. Lugging around the computer, monitor, keyboard, and mouse was a headache. I was not the only one hauling a monster around. For a while, I had a “lunchbox” computer that I used for my presentations. It contained a standard sized PC motherboard, hard drive, floppy, and other internal parts, along with an integral 7" monitor. The keyboard snapped over the front of the computer, closing it. While mine was a home built, no-name generic, it was the early lunchbox computers that gave Houston’s Compaq its early competitive edge. While still large and heavy, it was portable.

Today’s notebook computers are a far cry from my long-gone lunchbox. They are a fraction of the size and weight of the old lunchbox machines, but contrary to other high-tech electronic items, have not dropped substantially in price. Feature for feature, it is not rare for a notebook to be twice the price of a comparably equipped desktop computer. The relatively small size, and light weight is what makes today’s notebook

computer popular. They are conveniently portable, and can often run for a few hours on their internal battery, but those are about their only major advantages. For those who need portability, such as businesspersons who travel and need computing power, or people like me who frequently do presentations, a notebook computer is a near necessity. For those who want the power of a modern PC, in an even smaller and lighter package, the next generation of “Pocket PCs” is speculated to do to the contemporary notebook the same thing that the notebook did to the lunchbox—render them functionally obsolete.

The disadvantages of a notebook computer are many, yet still they are a necessity to many users. Other than their relatively high cost, notebook computers are also typically fragile, difficult to repair, hard to upgrade (other than swap hard drives or add memory), and according to widely published tests, have a much shorter operational lifetime than do desktop computers. Notebooks are also subject to easy loss or theft. In a recent news article, citing a report from Safeware, an insurance company that specifically insures computers for loss or damage, notebook computers have a far higher rate of loss. In 2001, for example, Safeware states that an estimated 600,000 notebook computers were lost or stolen, up 53% from the year 2000. A large part of this increase is due to the rapid increase in sales of notebook computers. Notebook computers are also one of the most obvious items to steal (and stolen) at airport security checkpoints, due to their small size, high value, and obvious nature. By comparison, while there is an estimated

seven times as many desktop computers in use than notebooks, only 15,000 desktops were reported stolen in 2001, according to Safeware.

While there are “ruggedized” notebook computers, such as Toshiba’s Toughbook series marketed to law enforcement, utility, and construction companies, the majority of notebooks are very easy to break, and expensive to repair. The notebook reviews published in the major computer magazines often include a “drop test” where an open notebook computer was gently pushed off a tabletop on to a carpeted floor, simulating a common falling accident. Many notebooks suffered major physical damage, with some models of major brands shattering to utter destruction. In addition to extraordinary care in protecting from theft, notebook

computers must also be transported in quality protective cases. I have seen people ruin a \$2000 notebook in a \$29 carry case, a false economy. Screens are especially sensitive to physical shock, can easily crack, and cost several hundreds of dollars to replace.

Lacking a large physical volume to circulate cooling air while turned on, notebook computers are more vulnerable to heat damage than desktops. Often containing only tiny cooling fans, and using the notebook itself as a heat sink, overheating is the principal cause of internal notebook failure. The more powerful the processor, the more prone the notebook is to overheating, a well-documented problem. I have heard several anecdotal stories of fairly new notebooks failing when left on

Continued on page 30

Letter From The Editor

ADDICTION. Are you addicted to your computer? (That’s intended to be provocative.) My wife says I am. But I accuse her of being addicted to her horses, so we’re all even. We put in about equal hours on our avocations.

How many hours a day are you in front of your computer? Of those, how many are for your vocation? Your avocation? How many are entertainment? How many times a day do you check your e-mail? Do you surf the internet or just use it to search for information? Do you use it to organize your life, finances, calendar, stock prices, addresses, etc.? Do you attend SEMCO meetings every month? Those are all “feel good” things and sound like worthy efforts. They justify addiction to your computer as a tool.

But there are negatives to addictions. How much time do you spend maintaining your computer. I include rebooting after crashes, trying to find why the darn thing seems to have a mind of its own and won’t do what you want, doing virus scans and file corruption scans and backups. I also include trying to get the latest new upgrades and software to run (if you have to have all the newest). These are all negatives that simply interfere and take huge amounts of time from useful pursuits. (My car doesn’t need all that much maintenance.)

Come to SEMCO and learn how to accent the feel-goods and reduce the feel-bads of your addiction.

Bill

overnight, due to overheating. I recently replaced my oldest daughter's notebook due to that exact cause. Published reports indicate that the average life expectancy of a notebook computer is only about 18 months, before it is lost, stolen, accidentally broken, overheated, or worn out. Notebooks, on average, have only about a fourth of the longevity of a desktop.

Desktop or notebook is a common decision to be made. Weigh the advantages and risks before purchasing either.

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.



GENERAL MEETING
12/08/2002
Carol Sanzi

The meeting was called to order by President Gary DeNise at 1:35 pm.

Nominations for officers and two Members-At-Large of the Board were opened.

Nominations for President: Tom Callow nominated Gary DeNise, and he accepted. Jerry Comptois nominated Elliot Chandler, and he accepted. There were no other nominations for President.

Nominations for Vice President: Gary DeNise nominated Vic Charns, and he accepted. There were no other nominations for Vice President.

Nominations for Treasurer: Gary DeNise nominated Roger Gay, and he accepted. There were no other nominations for Treasurer.

Nominations for Secretary: Tom Callow nominated Carol Sanzi, and she accepted. There were no other nominations for Secretary.

Nominations for 2 Members-At-Large of the Board: Bob Clyne nominated himself. Carol Sanzi nominated Chuck Moery, and he accepted. There were no other nominations for Members-At-Large of the Board.

Nominations were closed, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 pm.



BOARD MEETING
12/08/2002
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present: President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Publication Committee Chairman Bob Clyne, and Warner Mach representing SIB-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier. Also in attendance was DATA BUS Editor Bill Agnew. Arriving late was Vice-President Vic Charns. The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm.

Old Business

Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Warner Mach \$7.10 for refreshments. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Treasurer Roger Gay reported that SEMCO's bank balance is \$4,258.28. The membership is now at 91 with the non-renewal of Richard Gach.

New Business

Tom Callow moved that, assuming there are more than two persons running for the Members-at-Large board position, the two with the most votes would be

Continued on page 31

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

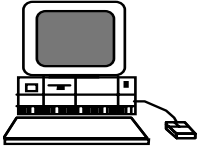


SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach



SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

January 12: Scanners - Part 2: Co-Chairman Tom Callow will continue his presentation on scanners and scanning, and he will include a more detailed demonstration of scanning transparencies and a discussion of how to scan in documents to be edited with a word processor.



Continued from page 30

elected. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Roger Gay moved that a membership survey be included in the January DATA BUS. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried. Any suggestions for survey changes should be sent to Bill Agnew.

Bob Clyne moved that a SEMCO volunteer party be held in January or February. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion, and it was carried. Carol Sanzi will coordinate arrangements.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 pm.

February 2003 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)

SEMCO & SIG DATA, & MEMBERS' ADS - Deadline: Sun, Jan. 19, 11:59pm.

Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: [<agnew@bignet.net>](mailto:agnew@bignet.net). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

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

January 12: Free Genealogy Programs on the Internet. Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will discuss and demonstrate genealogy programs that you can get free on the internet.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

January 12: Q&A: Member directed discussion.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

February 3: 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 free-way 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.

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

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)

Jan. 25–Saturday; 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)

Feb. 5–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: Instant Messaging.

DCOM Computer Club

Jan.10–Friday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm (Meet 2nd Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602.

Delta Computer Club

Jan.30–Thursday, 7 pm (Meet last Thursday); Bay de Noc C. C., Escanaba. Info: Gordon Nelson, Pres. & Editor at <gnelson@bresnanlink.net> or 906-428-1014.

DPUG, (Detroit Palm Users Group)

Jan. 9–Thursday, 7pm (Meet 2nd Thursday); Kensington Community Church, northwest corner John R & Square Lake Rds, Troy, MI. <<http://www.dpug.org>>. **Free membership.** Topic: David Rafferty, National Sales Exec. for Palm Enterprise Solutions Group.

MacGroup Detroit

Jan.19–Sunday, 3pm-5pm (Meet 3rd Sunday); Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (corner of Telegraph Rd.). Genius Table (Q&A) at 2 pm. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. Web: <<http://www.macgroup.org>> . Topic: QuickTime and Animation.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

Jan. 18–Saturday, (Meet 3rd Saturday); Coffee 9:00am, SIGs 9:30am, Main meeting 11:00am. Mack Open School, 920 Miller Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. Info: Cassie at <cassiemac@yahoo.com> or 313-971-8743. Topic: Ed Noonan from the Apple Store will show a virtual tour of the new Apple store and discuss new products.

MCUG (Michigan Computer Users Group)

Jan. 16–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

Jan. 9–2nd Thur, MAC SIG; Dec. 12–2nd Thur, Golden Masters SIG; Dec. 19–3rd 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 at Oak Park Library, Oak Park Blvd. at Coolidge Hwy.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Feb. 4–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.)

Jan.9–Thursday, 6:30-9:00pm (Meet 2nd Thursday); Saginaw. Web: <<http://www.svca.org>>.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group

Jan. 11–Saturday 10:00am-Noon (Meet 2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Info: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny McLampy 248-477-0190.

**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

Printer Tip No. 3

Keep your inkjet printer's nozzles (black and color) unclogged by regular use. Run the printer's maintenance routine, or simply print a single page every day or so. Never use alcohol and a cotton swab on the nozzles.

**DECEMBER
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**

Warner Mach, Coordinator

Gary Denise

Betty Mackenzie

Carol Sanzi

Chuck Moery

Roland Maki

Anita MacSorley

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

Geocaching: Cook

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@vmddlaw.com

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



SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

SEMCO CALENDAR—January/February

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING BUILDING, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY,
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

January 12—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: Scanners - Part 2:** Co-Chairman Tom Callow will continue his presentation on scanners and scanning, and he will include a more detailed demonstration of scanning transparencies and a discussion of how to scan in documents to be edited with a word processor.

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: Free Genealogy Programs on the Internet.** Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will discuss and demonstrate genealogy programs that you can get free on the internet.

February 3—MONDAY , 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.

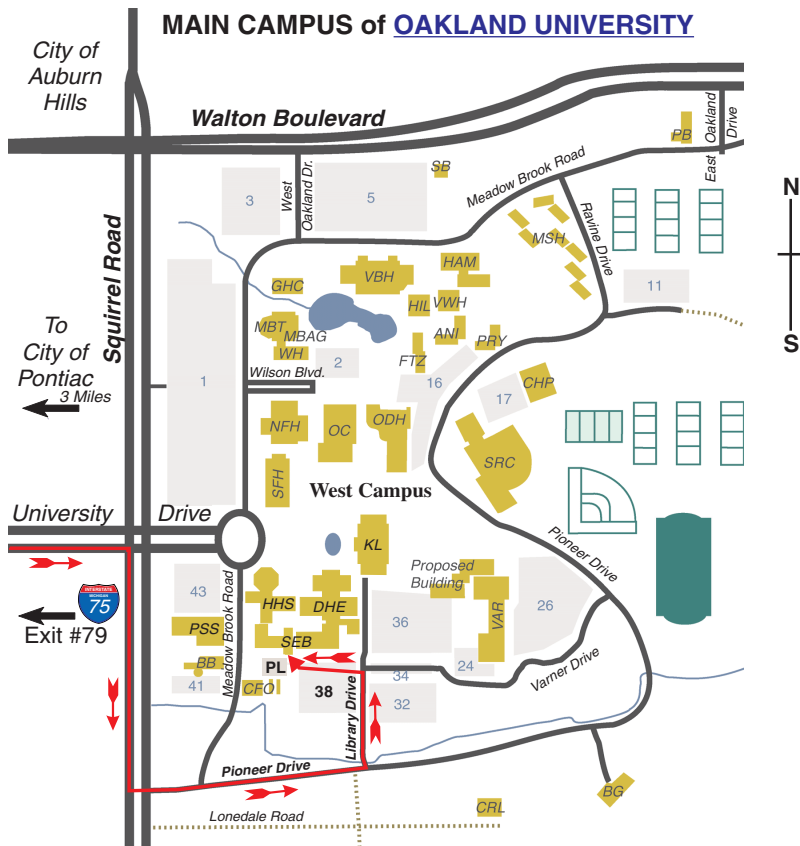
February 9—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday).

SEMCO, 1:30 pm. Topics: To be announced.

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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



MAP LEGEND

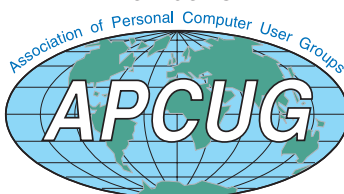
- SEB** Science and Engineering Building
- DHE** Dodge Hall of Engineering
- KL** Kresge Library

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).

Member of



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.

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

**SEMCO (future meetings)
January 12
February 9**

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