SEMCO

DATA BUS

IN THIS ISSUE

The SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), group dedicated to providing information, education and a forum to computer users (professional and amateur) and other interested individuals. Membership in SEMCO is open to all individuals 18 years or older. Persons under 18 years may become members through the sponsorship of a parent or guardian. Dues of $30/year include monthly DATA BUS and free personal ads.

All SEMCO correspondence should be addressed to

SEMCO - P.O. Box 707 - Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707
Website: **http://www.semco.org**
E-mail: **semco@semco.org**
General information: (voice) answering device in Royal Oak **(248) 398-7560**

DATA BUS is published monthly by SEMCO as its official newsletter. **Mail DATA BUS newsletter copy to: Bill Agnew, 3450 31 Mile Road, Washington, MI 48095; or e-mail to: agnew@bignet.net.** Editor is responsible for contents and control of the DATA BUS. Materials published herein may be used for non-commercial purposes only, without further permission of SEMCO or the authors, except as noted, providing credit is given to the author and source, i.e. DATA BUS, and issue date. Entire contents copyright © 2004 SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc.

SEMCO does not condone in any way the illegal copying of copyrighted material and will not tolerate such practice at any SEMCO function.

Your mailing label and membership cards list the month and year your membership expires. Newsletters will not be sent after the month of expiration. Back issues may not be available. Renew your membership as early as possible to avoid missing any newsletters.

This publication was created using Adobe PageMaker 6.5 Plus, donated by Adobe Systems, Inc.

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

Trade Shows

Because of all the great feedback, I'll start this month off with more about interesting trade shows we have worked. March began with one of my favorite shows called MegaCon, otherwise known as the "Comic Book" show. I first worked it last year and was warned I would be seeing all those crazies and weirdoes. Well, I WAS certainly surprised, but I didn't interpret the attendees that way at all. I saw many people who loved their hobby and had even hand crafted their costumes to represent certain characters, such as comic book, game, space, and other characters. Many costumes were absolutely gorgeous. I saw bodies and faces that required much time for makeup to get the necessary effect, and yes, some looked weird (like they are supposed to). I enjoyed the folks with the space suits, and those looked pretty awkward to wear. One young woman was a bit too daring with her costume, but she was quickly noticed, escorted from the show, and informed that paint does not substitute for wearing an upper garment in public, especially when there are children present. Never mind that the men loved it. We stopped another woman with extremely skimpy lower attire and referred her to show management.

Looking for a badge or wristband on people entering with costumes was not easy, but some held them out or pointed to them for us. The show occupied 108,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space with about a quarter of it devoted to special artistry tables, celebrity autograph tables, game tables, and the food area. The rest was vendor booths. There were lots of things other than comic books, including robots and digital badges. This show also used several large meeting rooms off the lobby area that worked with such things as games and animation movies in 3D. They well exceeded the 20,000 expected attendees, and the show floor was very packed. There were eight famous celebrities, such as June Lockhart and Angela Cartwright (of Lost In Space fame) signing autographs. We met most of them, since they went through our entrance, and they were great people. My grandson took home my show guide, so I can't list them all.

I talked to many attendees, asking how they acquired their beautiful costumes, and most said they had hand crafted it themselves with help from family members. I talked to many people with professional jobs and good incomes that loved this hobby. Even though I had a very intensive job, I was entertained all day long just by watching the people. I saw more daring cleavage during this show than any other I have worked. Remember, a badge or wristband (some won't wear a wristband

on the wrist) might actually be looped anywhere, so they are difficult to spot.

Of all the shows I have worked, this show's attendees were by far the nicest to work with. We were never angrily challenged for trying to enforce the rules, and everybody simply asked what they had to do. Mostly, acquiring a proper badge or wristband was the answer. Even though this show was mostly young people, there were some older generation and a few seniors. Since there were three other trade shows in the building at the same time, some tried to use other badges to enter the MegaCon.

We also worked the Home Electronics Expo (see <http://www.ehx2004.com> and <http://www.virtualEHXspring.com>) in March, and I was impressed with all the amazing technology that can improve your lifestyle (at a price). Most of it was about automated/remote lighting (low voltage), video, and sound. All this can be controlled from anywhere in the house that you desire, and even remotely if you prefer. For example, you can dial home (phone or computer) and check your refrigerator (if you're stopping at the store), start the food preparation, have your favorite music going, and set the house temperature. You can even take a look at the children or pets through a camera. There were lots of wall mounted thin screen TVs in the show, but the largest I saw on display had only a 60" plasma screen (they come as large as 80"). Many vendors specialized in cabling or switching only. Others specialized in audio or video specialty installations, and a few distributors, such as Worthington, had booths. There were a multitude of audio speaker designs,

including some wall mounted ones that blended in with the decor, but also had great sound.

There were also electrically operated driveway gates, garage doors, and even windows that would close automatically, such as by a rain sensor, or by remote control. A couple of booths offered timed or remote controlled drapery rods and vertical blinds. My favorite booth was the one with weather stations <http://www.peetbros.com>. I was devastated when my own weather station went out a year ago, but it was a 20-year-old Heathkit, and that company was gone years ago. I need a new one. I liked the design of these because of the illuminated readings rather than LCD, and it so happens their offices are within driving distance for me to check on a deal.

Unfortunately I missed working the Microsoft Show being held at the Gaylord Palms Resort, but we prefer not to work for the company that was given that security job, although they had asked us.

Reminder On A Great Software Deal
Colleen Toumayan from Executive Software called to remind us all that their special offer for Diskeeper Professional Edition 8.0 bundled with Undelete Home Edition for just $49.95 is still good. Check at <http://consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp> to order this bargain. We all know what great products Executive Software produces.

We All Like Freebies
Sally Springette, who is the editor for The Rochester Computer Society Monitor <http://www.rcsi.org>, sent me the following URL that I found interesting, and I thought you might like it also. If you don't like rebates, then

skip this and keep going. This URL <http://www.freeafterrebate.info/index.php?topic=Hardware> offers leads to purchasing products that will be free after the rebates. Be aware that third-party vendors offer these products, and you should do your own homework diligently before you decide to order. It might even be an older or discontinued product, and you will probably pay a shipping charge. With that caveat in mind, check it out. I imagine that it will change quite often.

Help For Your E-mail

I have a couple of friends who use MailWasher and say it works pretty well to eliminate spam, although it stopped a few legitimate e-mails at times. I questioned Hewie Poplock, a good friend whose opinion I value, who has used MailWasher for two years, and he is completely sold. He says if you set it up right, it won't filter out good messages, but if you get too fussy, it could happen. Sounds logical, but I have not had enough experience as yet. It incorporates learning by Bayesian statistics and uses FirstAlert!, a real-time global spam database. Something else I like is that you can check your e-mail right on the server instead of on your own computer, if you prefer.

Mathew Miller, who is the Product Development Manager for MailWasher, made a special offer available for user group people, and I asked him to extend the deadline so I could include it in my June column. He agreed, so you get the price advantage. Mathew is offering us MailWasher Pro and a one-year subscription to FirstAlert! for just $29.95, a saving of $7.00. You will need the promotional code of QTUGAD to order. This offer is good until July 31, 2004. Get more info on this tool for all that disgusting spam and download it at <http://www.firetrust.com/products/pro/>.

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 or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any 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 interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting NEW Web site pages for your viewing.

Internet Buying For Beginners
By Charlie Paschal

Buying on the Internet may intimidate some (not me), but the Internet can serve other purposes, such as a way to check prices against what you can find locally or in other nearby stores.

Ten years ago, I can't tell you the times I would buy something and then two weeks later find it for $50 or $100 less at another store in another city or town. After the normal fussing, I'd blame myself for bad judgment, although in those days I had no way of avoiding it.

Now though, with the Internet, there is no excuse.

First, a couple of points to remember about the Internet:

1. Items, in most cases, will be less expensive on the Internet.

2. Shipping costs must always be added into the cost of an item.

3. In some cases, you might save on taxes, but that depends on several factors.

4. Chain stores, such as Wal-Mart, Target, or Best Buy usually charge the same for an item, even if the store is in another state.

5. Some items might be refurbished or reconditioned, so make sure that the item you're looking at is actually new, because used items will be priced less.

There are several ways to check the price of an item, but you must do some homework first.

1. Get the item's name and model.

2. If you don't know all of that information, get as much as you can.

3. Plug that information into a search engine, such as <www.google.com>.

4. To get "real people" reviews of products, type that same name into <www.deja.com>.

Another way to use the Internet is to check the features of different models or the features of a model you're thinking about buying. This can reap dividends, because, while doing this research, you may find that the model you're buying does not have the features you really need.

Let's take digital cameras, for example. While using a broad search at Google using only the term digital camera, you might bring up thousands of hits, or you might turn up other digital cameras that have additional features you hadn't thought about while shopping. As an example, you probably will find a site that lists digital cameras, feature-by-feature, giving you a better idea of what you need to look for in a camera.

Among those hits, too, could be information that can save you money in other ways. A good example is a modem, a device that hooks up to a telephone line to connect to the Internet. Most computers come with what's called a "soft modem," meaning it uses the computer's computing power rather than its own.

Although this might sound good, it's actually bad, because these modems are cheap, cheap, cheap. If you're on a poor telephone line, you might want to get a "real" hardware modem, so you can have a better chance at higher-speed connections. By reading the information you get on modems, you could learn that a hardware modem is more expensive, but in the long run, will offer considerably better performance. Sometimes buying higher quality pays dividends.

This also brings up another way you can use the Internet beside buying goods: reviews.

We all know the old saying about everyone having an opinion, and on the Internet you can always find opinions and reviews of products. Despite everyone thinking the Internet is all about technology, the truth is that you can find information about every product known to man, including cars, furniture—you name it.

The two sites mentioned above can help you find reviews of nearly every product and real time opinions about products. Remember, though, that you must weigh the opinions, reading several before making up your mind. There will be some fervent opinions both for and against.

To see some of these, just type in the name of the product and the word "review" afterwards. For example, type in "Ford Taurus reviews" and hit search. Do this in each of the search engines to get not only reviews written by

professionals but reviews written by "real people" who don't normally write for a living. Quite often, the real people reviews give you more information than the professional ones.

You don't always have to buy on the Internet to reap its benefits. Browse, search, research; all of them can make your life more interesting—and safer.

Charlie Paschal is Editor/ Publisher, Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC, and also a Columnist at The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC. You can reach him at <Charlie@askcharlie.com>.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

The Intel PC User Group Website
A Portal To A Wealth Of Information
By Steve Peyrot

We members of user group communities throughout North America have a tremendous resource within a few simple keystrokes as we surf the Internet. This resource is the web site developed by Intel® for the purpose of educating and facilitating the transfer of highly desired information into the hands of PC User Group members.

Let's face it, every one of us wake each day with more and newer technologies being developed and introduced so rapidly that it's quite a challenge to keep up. As user group members we are continually challenged, not only with knowing about new technologies for our own use, but also because many folks within our circle of acquaintances, colleagues at work, neighbors, and other members of the community, rely on our expertise and knowledge to assist them with numerous hardware and software issues.

The web site that I am discussing with you has been developed by our partners at Intel to assist us in tackling our everyday challenges through a vast portal of information and knowledge. They have always realized the importance of user groups and are providing us this repository of information and support. Follow me as we tour The Intel PC User Group Site <http://www.intel.com/go/pcug>.

The Home Area

When a user logs in to the Intel PC User Group page for the first time, it does not look like there is much there, being so unobtrusive and uncluttered. However, once the user begins his journey through the few pull-down menu tabs that are easily accessible at the top of the screen, it becomes clear just how much information is available on this web site.

From the home area, a number of pull-down menus and some single items are available to the user. The first thing I would recommend to users is that they look on the left side of the page and click on the area that allows the user to sign up for the Intel® Tech Wire, an e-mail formatted newsletter delivered free on a regular basis with a wide variety of the latest personal computing information. The information delivered includes product information, articles and information on

customizing your PC and maximizing your PC experience, application software, recent news, tools and resources, technology trends, human interest stories, and much more.

Just above the area for signing up for Tech Wire is PC User Group Tools. This is an area that expands out and is where a user group officer can order and schedule one of Intel's "Seminars-in-a-Backpack," or anyone can download some of the best Intel seminar materials available to user groups. Complete PDF presentations and associated materials are available to download free of charge. I would recommend that users check this area out at least once a quarter for the newest subjects and tools available.

Finally, on the main home page of The Intel PC User Group Web Site are the centralized main menu pull down tabs conveniently located along the top center of the page. These menu tabs contain a tremendous amount of information, neatly compiled and sorted into five simple categories. Let us briefly go through each of these pull-down tabs in sequential order:

Resource Centers

The Resource Centers link sends users to an area where they can easily access usable information on Personal Computing, Business and Enterprise, Hardware Design, Software Development, and the Intel Reseller Center. For example, under the Personal Computing Center, there are tools to help you find the right notebook or the right desktop system for you, learn how to build your own PC from Intel-validated, quality components, and compare performance of various processors. And that's just one of the Resource Centers!

Products and Services

The menu tab for Product and Services leads the user to an area that lists just about every Intel product there is. Here one will find information about motherboards, processors, memory, flash cards, adapters, chipsets, controllers, servers, software, mobile, media centers, and so much more. This area also provides links to highly requested information such as The Intel Processor Roadmap: a vision into the future of processing technologies. When visiting Products and Services, I can highly recommend exploring the Intel SOFTWARE COLLEGE, accessible through the "Software" tab. Some of the best training resources available worldwide are found by following this link!

Solutions

The Solutions web page is a very informative area specializing in hardware, software, services, and tools. This area provides information and answers for a variety of solutions for business needs and technical challenges. Here one can find answers and solutions from not only Intel but from other third party providers. Listed also in this area are announcements of seminars and developer conferences or forums. This is the optimal resource to locate solutions and answers.

Technologies and Trends

This web site area is certainly one of my favorites; I could stay logged on here for a long time! Here, you can dive into the Intel Technology Journal, read the Technology @ Intel Magazine, find out about the latest research and development news, catch up on the latest developments involving wireless technologies, the digital home, digital media adaptors, Intel processors with

Hyper-Threading™ technology, and much more. In a nutshell, if someone wants to know the latest information regarding any of the newest technologies, this web page is the place to come first.

Support and Downloads

Last but certainly not least is the Support and Downloads page. If you have a product with the name Intel on it, chances are that you will find complete information, product support, and a host of software drivers and patches. This web page also provides product information and technical research support regarding a wide array of Intel products.

This web site provides complete support for motherboards, notebook products, processors, network cards, communication products, graphic cards, chipsets, controllers, flash memory, PC cameras, and many other PC accessories. This area of the web site is of significant value to all us owners of Intel products. The high level of support available on this web site clearly exemplifies the commitment by Intel Corporation to its users.

I invite you to log on to <www.intel.com/go/pcug> and explore the areas I have mentioned plus the dozens more I have not had the space to discuss in this article. Our main philosophy as user group members is for users to help other users, so we are very fortunate to have a company such as Intel support our User Groups the way they do and provide us with so many resources and so much information. At Intel's user group support site, Intel stands ready to help us in this quest of educating our communities and furthering our knowledge into the future.

Steve Peyrot is APCUG Treasurer, APCUG Board of Advisors for Region 13, and Vendor Relations Director for the East Tennessee Computer Society <peyrots@bellsouth.net>

─────────────

Preventive Maintenance Who's to Blame?

By Russell James

Who should we blame for the many attacks on our computer systems? We have viruses that try to attack us through e-mail, Web pages, and through our networks. Some of them will even try to get into our systems through some port on our system that we had no idea was there, much less open.

There are three main groups that can be considered as we try to stop this nonsense: software vendors, the end users, and the hackers. They are all being touted as the culprits in this war of code on the Internet. An argument could be made for any one of these groups, and all should be held

responsible to some degree. Let's take a look at each of the groups, and you can make up your own mind.

Vendors

Microsoft and the other software vendors should be expected to put out a product that is secure and able to withstand the blows that the hackers throw at them. The problem with this thought is that it is going to be virtually impossible to produce a software product that is totally free from vulnerabilities. If they could, they would, but we would never have any new products, because it would take so long for them to develop and write the code.

Even though the product on the market is not as secure as it can be from the beginning, I think that Microsoft and most of the other vendors are doing the most that can be expected of them. The Windows Update site has gotten to the point that it is easy enough for end users to navigate without too much fear. There are some improvements that could be made, and it seems that they are coming online at an admirable pace. It has been a long while since there has been a problem with one of the updates crashing computers instead of helping the situation. You can get to the site free of charge and the ActiveX component will analyze your software to determine what updates you need. The updates are listed in three separate categories, with the Critical Updates and Service Packs being the ones that need to be installed.

End Users

The next group that is being blamed is the end users. They play a big part in keeping the viruses out of their own systems by the amount of time that they spend updating their software. With the Windows Update site and the notification programs that are available for download, there is no reason to allow your system to be without one of the security updates that will stop the breaches of your computer programs.

There is a program that is available for download from the Windows Update site under the heading of Critical Updates and Service Packs called the Windows Critical Update Notification. This is one item that should be running on startup on every Windows machine out there. It will connect to the Microsoft Windows Update site whenever you are connected to the Internet and check for Critical Updates. If one is available, you will get a notification on your screen telling you about the update. You click on the button and the Windows Update site appears. All you need to do is agree to the License Agreement, and the download and installation will proceed. Windows XP users have this installed as a default with the only difference being that the notification comes in the form of an icon in the taskbar, and the update is downloaded before you are notified. You click on the icon and you can start the install right away without going to the update site.

Hackers

The last group is the hackers, and they are the ones that should be held accountable for their misdeeds. The hackers are the ones who are writing the viruses, and they are the ones who should be hung from their toenails at first light. They are the kids with too much time on their hands, that spend weeks on end writing code that will infiltrate our systems through a vulnerability that has been revealed in a chat room or on the Microsoft Windows update site. Most of the active exploits

that are out on the net do not come to full strength until many months after the patch has been released.

There is no way that all the blame can be laid on the end users and Microsoft. We all know that the hackers are the true criminals, and the end users and Microsoft are innocent victims. The problem is that you can't leave the keys in the ignition and then get mad when your car gets stolen. Microsoft is doing what it can to combat the situation, and you as the end user need to do your part to use the tools that they are giving to help to alleviate this problem. People who allow their systems to get infected with viruses because of the lack of virus protection or not installing updates as needed should have their license for the Internet Superhighway suspended until they can bring their software back up to an acceptable level that does not endanger the rest of us.

Russell James is Operations Manager at BJ Associates of San Antonio, an authorized service center for Toshiba and Sony systems. You can reach him at <russell@bjassociates.com>. Article Copyright© 1996-2003 Alamo PC Organization, Inc., San Antonio, TX .

Crop Circles On The Web
By Sam Alter

Now that the crops have been harvested in the Northern Hemisphere, the stories and pictures of "Crop Circles" have diminished. But fear not, they will return. The day of simple round areas being flattened on a field of grain are a thing of the past. Now there are teams of pranksters, artists, beings from outer space, or from middle earth actually competing against each other to create ever-more-elaborate designs.

Techniques have been developed for entering and exiting the fields without leaving obvious tracks (one team uses bar stools to move through the grain without leaving footprints). There are even videos and web sites that show you how it's done, including the math and tools behind the complex geometries of the fantastically elaborate designs. I personally like the idea that there are intelligent being out there that have an eye for design. Just imagine that the crop fields are the walls of their museums. Or maybe they create their art here, take a picture of it, and then hang it on the walls at home. How about if they are really scribbling graffiti, like "I was Here," on all the places they visit?

Try <www.cropcircleconnector.com>, a site that has been visited by over 2,000,000 people since November, 1995. To view the archived material, you will have to become a member, but view the Newest Crop Circle Images, which are allowed Public Domain Access. Many of these images also show the geometry that created the figure and descriptions as well. There are several books for sale showing the Circles for various past years. There is a link to various sites, one being Temporary Temple Homepages at <http://www.temporarytemples.co.uk> run by Steve Alexander & Karen Douglas. A lot of the information is about them and what they have for sale. Also pictures and descriptions about various Circle areas, as well as their trips looking for Circles and old stone circles.

At <http://www.bltresearch.com> the biophysicist, Dr. Levengood,

together with Nancy Talbot and John Burks and a small army of volunteers form the BLT Research Team (any relation to the Sandwich Formation?) who search the world for all sorts of physical information. They are getting various scientists to accompany them for sampling soil and crops from the circles and have come up with some very interesting and disturbing information. A study funded by the Rockefeller Foundation should lead to a scientific paper being published.

One group of people decided that they would expose to the world just what these crop circles are. At <http://www.circlemakers.org>, everything is explained. Articles by the circle makers, movies of the work being done, witness accounts are all here. There is even a copy of an article from Nature, written in 1880 about a crop circle in Guildford in Surrey.

Just to mention a few additional web sites, look at:

<http://www.csicop.org/list/listarchive>—Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal.

<www.cropcircleresearch.com>—the number one site for serious scientific and rational crop circle research.

<www.dcca.nl>—Dutch Center for Crop Circle Studies.

<www.cropcirclecereal.com>—How to use this site to market a cereal that came from Crop Circles.

Enjoy and Take Care

From BocaBits, Boca Raton Computer Society, December, 2002, <http://brcs.org>. Sam Alter is a Contributing Editor of BRCS.

Circles: Circumference equals about 3.14159 times the diameter.

Deleting Information from Hard Drives
By Gene Barlow

The early hard drives on mainframe computers were not considered very reliable. Information stored on these early devices would often not record properly or could become contaminated easily. Programmers using these drives would write the data in two separate locations on the drive. Then, when the data was needed later, it would be read from both locations and compared in memory to make sure it was still the same. If differences were detected, then the program could not continue until the data was corrected and rewritten to the hard drive.

As technology advanced, special mathematical checking codes were stored with the data that could tell if the information retrieved from a hard drive was still valid. These codes eliminated the need to record the data twice, but did nothing to clean up any errors found.

It wasn't long before more sophisticated checking codes were introduced that could not only detect errors, but would also actually correct most single and double character errors. Still, the recording of information on hard drives was not considered very reliable, and frequent backup copies of the drives were necessary.

When the IBM PC was introduced with hard drives, the designers of these drives were still very concerned about losing data on these devices. So, everything was done to make sure the data written to the drive remained on the hard drive and could not be accidentally deleted or lost. Today, it is almost impossible to permanently delete information, once it is written to a hard

drive. Who would have thought that this retention of information would become a problem for computer users?

In today's world, privacy and security of information are major concerns. Identity theft is a major problem that we all face. With just a few pieces of information about us, dishonest individuals can steal large sums of money from us and ruin our credit ratings. At the same time, computers and the internet have made information much more widely available, not only to us, but to these dishonest individuals. Unless we are careful, our private information can get into the hands of these dishonest individuals, and they will certainly take advantage of the situation.

Recent studies have shown that hard drives on PCs contain a wealth of private information that most users thought they had removed from the drive months or years earlier. What these users do not understand is that simply deleting a file from the hard drive does not permanently remove it from the drive. In fact, all that deleting a file does is to flag that file space for future reuse. It may be years before that space is reused with another file, or it may never be reused. So, the deleted information remains on the hard drive, hidden from the user, but still there. Dishonest individuals using commonly available software can find and access all of these deleted files.

Users that are knowledgeable enough to know that deleted files remain on the hard drive are often surprised to learn that formatting the hard drive does not get rid of these deleted files either. All the formatting function does is to create a few tables at the beginning of the partition. The deleted information on the hard drive is not removed or changed during a format.

Operations such as defragging a hard drive only cause your private information to be copied and spread across the entire hard drive. So, how can you permanently remove information once it is written to a hard drive?

The only effective way to permanently remove information from a hard drive is to write blanks or zeros over the top of the deleted information. This obliterates the information that was written there earlier. To do this, special hard drive wiping utilities must be used. Two of the best hard drive wiping utilities were developed by WhiteCanyon Software. I have come to know and rely on these excellent products. One or both of them could ease your job of keeping your hard drive clean of hidden private or personal information.

The first of these two products is called WipeDrive. This is the bulldozer of the two products. When you use it to wipe your hard drive, it starts at the beginning of the drive and writes blanks on top of everything on the drive. It continues to wipe the drive until it reaches the end of the hard drive. When it is done, the entire drive is totally clean and empty. Nothing remains on the hard drive that a dishonest person could see or use against you. Everyone should use this utility before they sell or give their old computer or hard drive away. Otherwise, you are giving away all of your private information with your old computer. WipeDrive boots from a diskette or CD and can wipe all PC type hard drives. WipeDrive sells for up to $45 in computer stores, but user group members can obtain a copy from our User Group Store for just $24.

The second of these two products is called SecureClean. This is more like a vacuum cleaner, than a bulldozer. It vacuums the dirt out of the carpet, but does not knock over the furniture or the walls. In other words, it can clean the deleted information off your hard drive, but does not disturb the actively used files on the drive. The selective ability of SecureClean to wipe your hard drive, but not disturb your current files, makes it the ideal tool to use on your current hard drives to keep them clean of deleted information. I recommend that you run SecureClean about once a month on your computer to permanently wipe over all deleted information on the drive.

Packaged with SecureClean is a bonus utility call SecureScan. This product will scan your hard drive and show you all of the deleted information that is hidden on the drive. You will be surprised at what you'll find still on your hard drive. You may find personal files that you deleted months or years ago that are still on the drive. You may even find some files that were accidentally deleted and you thought were forever lost. If a deleted file is still complete, SecureScan can even bring this file back to life and make it available again on your hard drive. This un-delete function of SecureScan is not the main purpose of this program, but a nice additional feature that you may want to use. SecureClean and SecureScan install on any Windows operating system. SecureClean sells for $40, but user group members can obtain a copy from our User Group Store for just $24. Buy both WipeDrive and SecureClean/Secure Scan for just $39.

To order either or both of these excellent hard drive wiping utilities, go to the User Group Store at <http://www.usergroupstore.com> (or <http://www.ugr.com/store>). You can read more about these two products in the security department of the store. Click on any of the Buy Now buttons to get to our secure web order form. Complete the form including the special code of UGWCM04. You will be given the chance to verify and correct your order before it is submitted. Once you submit it, we will receive it shortly, and normally we ship all orders the following morning. You should have your products in just a few days. While you are at the User Group Store, check out the many other products we offer, all at great user group discounts.

Preventing personal and private information from building up on our hard drives is important for all of us to do. Get the tools you need to keep your drive clean today. If you have any questions about these products or this technical newsletter, please contact me at <gene@ugr.com>. I look forward to helping you.

Copyrighted May 2004
Gene Barlow, User Group Relations
<gene@ugr.com>

User group newsletter editors may print this article in their monthly newsletter as long as the article is printed in its entirety and not cut or edited.

Don't Forget System Restore
By Charlie Paschal

Viruses are always a threat, but did you know that a virus can "return" without warning if you don't turn off one Windows XP feature when cleaning up from a virus?

One of XP's great features is System Restore that can take your system back to a time when it was running better. I've used it countless times to return an ill-acting system back to a healthy time.

What if, though, you get a virus? Because System Restore can contain system settings that will restore the virus itself, it should always be turned off before you remove a virus. To do that:

1. Right Click on My Computer, select Properties, and left click. Click on the System Restore tab and check the box labeled "Turn Off System Restore on all Drives."

Then, clean up the virus and reboot. Don't forget to turn System Restore back on after cleaning up the virus.

Charlie Paschal is the Editor/ Publisher for the Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC, and also a Columnist at The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC. You can reach him at <Charlie@askcharlie.com>.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Sage 1: There are 2 theories to arguing with a woman...neither works.

Sage 2: Before you criticize someone you should walk a mile in his shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away, and you have his shoes.

Dear Consummate Capitalist Consumer
By Dennis Stacy

Dear Consummate Capitalist Consumer:

First off, the family here at OneUpU would like to thank you for your purchase of the OneUpU All-in-One C130Z Color Scanner, Copier, Printer and Coffee Grinder, all for the retail price of only $249. We would also like to thank you for returning the manufacturer's $50-off coupon that came with your purchase.

Unfortunately, the coupon and qualifying materials you submitted did not meet our qualifications for a refund under the terms of the fine print of our agreement. Had you had on hand a magnifying glass capable of resolving 2pt print, we might not have had to reject your application for a refund for the following reasons:

1. As clearly stated, your purchase had to be made between 10 and 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 16, 2002. Unfortunately, your purchase was made between 10 and 11 a.m. Central Standard Time, and OneUpU, located in Redmond, Washington, operates under Pacific Standard Time. We regret any confusion our wording may have caused.

2. Again, as specifically stated, we asked that you enclose a copy of your proof-of-purchase receipt, not the original as you did here. If you would

like your original receipt returned for any reason, please contact Customer Service between the hours of 4:30 and 5 p.m. PST. Punch in your 12-digit product serial number and your original 16-digit CD key number located on the installation CD that shipped with your OneUpU All-in-One C130Z. The serial number itself is located on the inside of the RAM upgrade access plate on the bottom of the C130Z, easily accessible by standing the 70-pound unit on its side, unplugging the USB cable and removing the four Torq screws at each corner. Be advised that the use of a non-Torq screwdriver may void your 30-day product warranty, never mind stripping the heads of the screws themselves.

3. You were also requested to include a copy of the UPC bar code from the original product packaging, to be removed by box cutters, not pinking shears as you did. Again, you included the original. If, for any reason, you would like the latter returned, please see Note 2 above and contact Customer service between 5 and 5:30 p.m. PST. Please have your 22-digit Customer ID number handy.

4. In order to qualify for OneUpU's $50 cash refund, you were also required to postmark your return between 2 and 3 p.m. on Monday, February 18, 2002. The fact that this turned out to be President's Day in some areas of the country is neither the fault nor the responsibility of OneUpU or any of its affiliates. You may want to contact the Post Office and/or your local congressperson to complain. Or visit OneUpU's user-friendly Web site, where you will learn no more than what we've just told you here, albeit with lots of colorful graphics attached.

5. You also failed to fill out some of the Personal Information data OneUpU requested. Some of these fields are optional, but others are required in order that OneUpU may better serve its customers' needs. Among OneUpU's required data fields, you neglected to mention whether your first born was a male, and, if so, whether he was circumcised or not. OneUpU does not share any data obtained from its customers and users, with the sole exception of Microsoft, and only then because we have no choice if we want to continue to exist as a relatively independent entity. For more information about our Privacy Policy, please visit our web site. If you're a first-time visitor, just type Circumcision in the Password box and hit Enter. (Note that all passwords are case sensitive.) If that doesn't work, you might try double-clicking.

6. Finally, in order to comply with our coupon policy, OneUpU specifically requested that the purchase of your All-in-One C130Z not only meet all of the above requirements in order to assure a $50 cash refund, but also stipulated that your purchase be made while standing on your head. We have reviewed the videotape file you submitted with your coupon (as well as the store's in-house surveillance cameras) and are forced to conclude that you never once left your feet. In addition, you also failed the breath analyzer test administered at the time of check out. And it would appear that your driver's license has expired. (Are you sure that's a picture of you and not someone else, or has your hair just prematurely turned gray?)

Your application for an additional $5 refund on one-pound pouches of All-American Columbia Coffee Beans

for first-time users failed on the same above grounds.

Again, we here at OneUpU appreciate your purchase of our product and look forward to serving you in the future. Visit our Web site regularly for additional special sales and coupon savings!

Sincerely,

Janet Justice Marketing & Refunds OneUpU,Inc.

Dennis Stacy is a free-lance writer living in San Antonio,TX. The article is from the March, 2002 issue of PC Alamode, the newsmagazine of the Alamo PC Organization. Contact <editor@alamopc.org>.

Letter From The Editor

This month the Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition (IGVC) will be held at Oakland University on June 12-14. This is the contest in which college engineering students build golfcart or smaller autonomous vehicles controlled by onboard computers (no remote control) and compete in a lane following obstacle course and a GPS Navigation Challenge. The vehicles have cameras to see the lane markings and sonar or laser sensors for obstacle detection. Global Positioning System receivers let them use satellite information to find waypoints identified only by latitude and longitude.

On Saturday and Sunday the teams make oral presentations of their design reports and tweak and tune their vehicles on a practice course. And on Monday the competition runs all day long. Twenty eight teams from schools all over the country and Canada and Japan are expected to compete. It all happens in the field at the corner of Adams and Walton Roads, and the public is invited.

If you would like to see how computers can control and direct vehicles through cameras, radar, sonar, and GPS sensors, come on out and enjoy the fun. Who knows; someday this may be the way your car is driven.

I'll be there as an official.   Bill

ANNOUNCEMENT

PICNIC
HOLLY COUNTRY
COMBINED USER GROUP

SEMCO President Gary Denise will host a picnic at his home for three User Groups—SEMCO, Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts, and Holly User Group.

Spouses and Guests Welcome
June 19, 2004, 11am-3 pm
Rain or Shine
Meet some new area enthusiasts and enjoy the long-awaited summer

Location:
5364 Grange Hall Road
Holly, MI 48442
Holly Exit off I-75
East of I-75 and Dixie Highway
4th Driveway past Tripp/Van Intersection
248-634-7514 or 248-459-1574

Bring:
A dish to pass (hot or cold)
and your own beverage

Furnished:
Famous Koegel Natural Casing Hot Dogs (Grilled to Perfection)

**BOARD MEETING
5/9/04
Carol Sanzi**

Board Members Present:
President Gary DeNise, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier, Publications Committee Chairman Bill Agnew, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. The meeting was called to order at 12:08 p.m.

Old Business:
Tom Callow gave the Treasurer's report. He reported that the bank balance is $5012.84 with $120 not deposited. SEMCO's membership stands at 85 with renewals due from Vic Charns, Johnathan Lodden, Sue Sullivan, Lawrence Chenault, Donald Clark, and Al Lewis.

Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Tom Callow $41.19 for the past two phone bills. Richard Jackson seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Warner Mach reported that $4.25 in refreshments contributions have been received.

New Business:
Gary DeNise will be hosting a picnic at his home at 11:00 a.m. on June 19. All SEMCO members and family are invited. Directions will be given at next month's meeting.

Adjournment:
Roger Gay moved to adjourn. Richard Jackson seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

18

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)


SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

June 13: Speeding Up The Slowest Part Of Your Computer—You! SIG-IBM Co-ChairmanTom Callow will discuss how to be more productive with your computer.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

June 13: Wacom Graphic Tablet. SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will discuss and demonstrate his new graphic tablet and photo editing software.
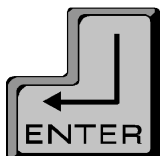
May Meeting Attendance: 19 (Mothers Day)

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

June 13: Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience.

New Meeting Location
After March 2004 SEMCO will be meeting in Rooms 235, 208, and 210 in Elliott Hall at Oakland University. The General and SIG meetings will be in Room 235. You can park in the northeast corner of lot 36 (see map on page 23) and enter the main entrance of Elliott Hall. Immediately inside, Room 235 is in the hallway to the left. Rooms 208 and 210 are farther down the main hallway and to the right.

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

July 5: 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. **Topic: Wide ranging discussion of computers and computing.**

July 2004 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun, June 20, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <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 Page 2).

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

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)
June 26–Saturday, 10am (4th Saturday); W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd., 1 mile west of Orchard Lk Rd., Info: Jack Lockman at <thunder@tir.com or 313-341-8855.

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)
No Meeting in July or August–Wednesday, 7 p.m. (1st Wednesday): Rm 201, Clara E. Mackenzie Library-Science Bldg, St. Clair Community College, 323 Erie St., Port Huron. Ron Walters, 810-679-4144. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>.

DCOM Computer Club
June 11–Friday, 6:30 - 8:30pm (2nd Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602.

DPUG (Detroit Palm Users Group)
No Meeting in July or August–Thursday, 7pm (2nd Thursday); Kelly Services Building, 999 West Big Beaver, corner Crooks & Big Beaver Rds, Troy, MI. <http://www.dpug.org>. **Free membership.**

FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)
July13–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817 (enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn/FACE/index.html>.

MacGroup Detroit
June 20–Sunday, 3pm-5pm (2nd or 3rd Sunday); Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (corner of Telegraph Rd.). Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: Buying and Selling on eBay.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
June 19–Saturday, (3rd Saturday); 11:00am main meeting (SIGs at 9:30); Changed Location: Washtenaw County Library, 4135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48107. <http://www.mactechnics.org>). Info: Cassie at <cassiemac@yahoo.com> or 313-971-8743.

MCUG (Michigan Computer Users Group)
June 17–Thursday, 7pm (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
June 10–(2nd Thur), MAC SIG; June 10–(2nd Thur), Golden Masters SIG; June 17–(3rd Thur), Green Apple SIG; Eagles Hall in Clawson, 174 Bowers St (one block North of 14-Mile and one block East of Main). Carl Pendracki 248-647-8871 or <carlpen@aol.com>. Web: <http://www.themichiganapple.com>. Topic: Microsoft Office 2004 vs. Appleworks 6.

Oak Park Computer Club
Meets every Friday, 10:15am at Oak Park Recreation Bldg., Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)
July 6–Tuesday, 7:30pm (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.)
July 8–(2nd Thursday), 6:30-9:00pm; Zauel Library, Shattuck & Center Rds., Saginaw. Web: <http://www.svca.org>.

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

**MAY
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Betty MacKenzie
Roland Maki
Carol Sanzi
Adele Sapilewski

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

Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am-10pm .... clyne@lodden.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
Yuhasz, Steve .... Help@yuhasz.org

**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR—June/July

ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

June 13–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

SEMCO Board Meeting at 12:00 noon, **Room 235.** For Officers and SIG Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 pm, **Room 235.**

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 pm, **Room 235. Program: Speeding Up The Slowest Part Of Your Computer—You!** SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will discuss how to be more productive with your computer.

SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 pm, **Room To Be Announced At The General Meeting.** Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

NOVICE-IBM GROUP 3:45 pm, **Room 208 or 210. Program: Q&A Discussion Directed By The Audience.**

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 pm, **Room 235. Program: Wacom Graphic Tablet.** SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will discuss and demonstrate his new graphic tablet and photo editing software.
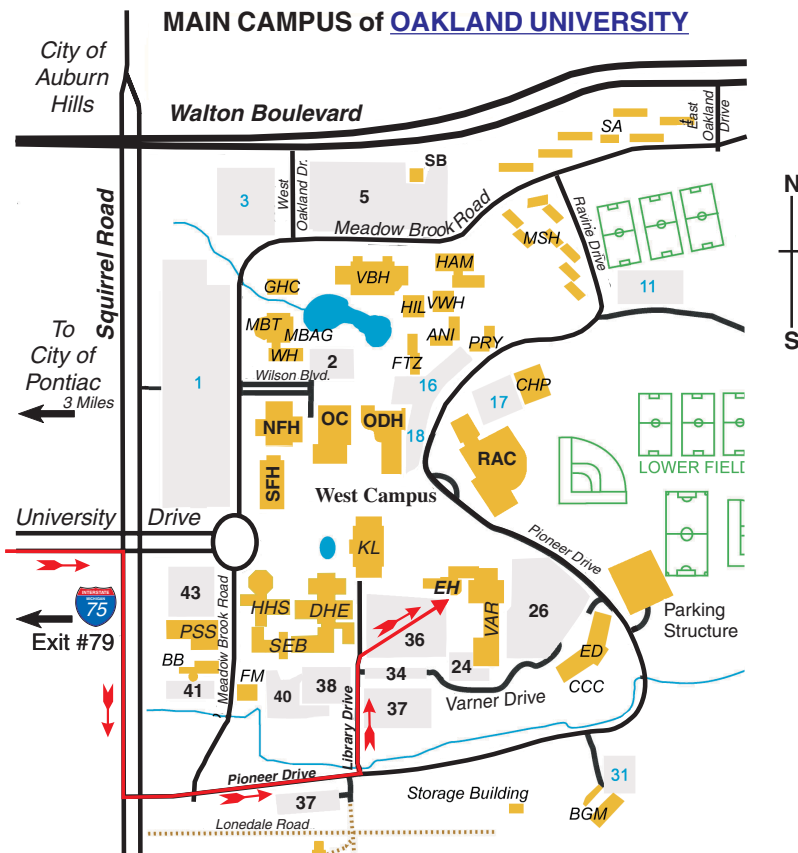
July 5–MONDAY , 6:45 pm (Meets first Monday), SIG-ADVANCED Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd.,Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway: take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd. and turn right. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.**

July 11–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)

MAIN CAMPUS of OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

City of
Auburn
Hills

Walton Boulevard

City of Auburn Hills

Squirrel Road

To
City of
Pontiac
3 Miles

University Drive

Exit #79

West Oakland Dr.

Meadow Brook Road

Wilson Blvd.

Meadow Brook Road

Pioneer Drive

Library Drive

Pioneer Drive

Lonedale Road

Ravine Drive

East Oakland Drive

N
S

SA
SB
3
5
MSH
GHC VBH HAM
HIL VWH
MBT MBAG ANI PRY
WH 2 FTZ
1 16 CHP
NFH OC ODH 17
SFH 18 RAC
West Campus
KL
EH
43 HHS DHE VAR 26
PSS SEB 36 Parking Structure
BB ED
FM 34 24 CCC
41 40 38 37
Varner Drive
37 Storage Building 31 BGM
11
LOWER FIELD

MAP LEGEND
EH   Elliott Hall
VAR Varner Hall
DHE Dodge Hall of Engineering
KL   Kresge Library

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 that 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. When you get to parking lot 36, proceed to the far (northeast) corner of the parking lot. After parking, go into the nearest entrance. Follow the "SEMCO" signs.

Member of
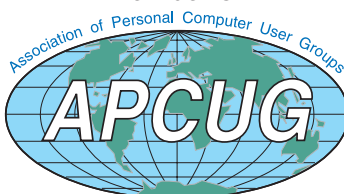
The meetings at Oakland University are sponsored by the University's Academic Computer Services (ACS).
SEMCO thanks Oakland University and ACS for their assistance.

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

APCUG

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
  June 13
  July 11

**SEMCO: A Community Organization
Helping People for the 21st Century**