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SEMCO MEETINGS

**Sunday,
July 11 2004**

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 DealsGuy
Greater Orlando Computer UG
by Bob "The Cheapskate" Click

Some Rebates Aren't So Bad

We've all heard horror stories about rebates, and I seldom purchase anything with a rebate unless it's a good deal even without the rebate. I recently purchased an 80-gig external Western Digital hard drive for \$110 that had two rebates, one for \$30 and another for \$20. After mailing them, I noticed I had mailed the wrong barcode. A month later I received a postcard telling me I had not included the UPC barcode and offering the opportunity to resubmit it, which I did for the \$30 rebate. Several days later, I received the same notice for the \$20 rebate, but misplaced that card. Since I had only seven days to resubmit it, I thought all was lost when I finally found it too late.

I gave up on that rebate, but was filing another for a free telephone and was confused about something. I called the 800 number they provided for questions, and got my answer. Before she hung-up, she asked if she could be of any further help, and I laughingly told her about the one I had misplaced

and the time had expired. She said it was no problem, and after giving her my information, she fixed it and got it back in the process. It was an OfficeMax rebate, which I have since received.

Since then, I called the OfficeMax rebate center about another one I hadn't received after almost a year. I was told the Seattle rebate center it was mailed to was closed, but he would fix it. I received the acknowledgement by e-mail the next day, and the check a week later. Fortunately, I have not lost any rebates so far.

Ain't Technology Grand?

Trade shows often have magazine stands with interesting ones to read. At the Home Electronics Expo I found a stand that I enjoyed, ElectronicHouse <<http://www.electronichouse.com>>, and this item caught my eye: We often look in our bathroom vanity's mirror, but what about one that may seem like it morphs? Royal Phillips Electronics has developed a new twist for the bathroom vanity called Mirror TV, and it might be looking back at you, sort of. It will turn into a TV screen that could be showing your favorite news broadcast or stock reports. How about that—turned off, it's a mirror, or on, it's a TV! When offered, it will first appear in hotels, then to home users sometime in 2005. If the news is interesting though, how long might those BMs take? What about if your stock is dropping? Don't watch it too long or you may shut off the circulation to your legs. Can they be sued for that? Probably!

ElectronicHouse also had an article about putting your audio system on IP. Giving your speakers their own IP address properly can make amazing improvements to the sound. I was also

looking through an issue of FlatPanel World that had interesting articles. It is a new publication by CE-Pro. One article offers explanations about various types of flat panel displays. I didn't see a Web site except for the parent magazine's <<http://www.ce-pro.com>>. Author Robert Archer stresses that dealers should know the difference between LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) and LCOS (Liquid Crystal On Silicon), as well as plasma display technologies, when giving their sales pitch. He explains them all including DLP (Digital Light Processing) and explains the importance of calibration on a thin screen, which can cost upward of \$300. He discusses some technologies of plasma displays. I saw several great articles about FPDs (Flat Panel Displays) and audio techniques.

In the March issue of Digital Connect Magazine (see it at <<http://www.digitalconnectmag.com>>), I read an article concerning the licensing of low voltage integrators (installers). I'll bet many of you didn't know that in some states, integrators who work with low voltage systems, such as remote controlled lighting, audio/video, or telephone systems, must be licensed. Their license presently specifies 50 volts or less. One state is considering a bill requiring home installers performing electrical work at more than 50 volts to obtain high voltage licenses. CEDA (Consumer Electronic Design and Installation Assoc.) is lobbying the state to classify high-voltage projects as starting at 100 volts, a level that would not shut out integrators with a low voltage license from working with audio, video, and home telephone systems. You might think that anybody could pull in some low voltage cables

and hook them up according to the color code, but an experienced integrator for that type of wiring would know the importance of the proper wire and routing to eliminate interference and other problems. From my own experience in installing auto audio, wire placement is extremely important. Not just anybody is capable of always installing a successful integrated digital system without experience.

With home wiring turning toward IT more and more, appliances and controls are also changing. For example, you are all familiar with your AC/heat thermostat, which originally had only the ability to turn the system on or off. Times are changing—new controls are capable of talking to the appliances as well as controlling them. Other appliances will become the same way in the future. New technologies pretty much let your home think for itself. I hope mine doesn't get mad at me for neglecting it!

Last Minute Deal Changes

Two vendors pulled out at the last minute because their material suppliers are raising prices at a dramatic rate, and they want that to stabilize, so here are some things I have kept in reserve. Also, if you forgot to take advantage of the great Executive Software Deal, I think they will still honor it, but act soon <<http://consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp>>. Don't forget also the MailWasher deal from last month <<http://www.firetrust.com/products/pro/>>.

A Nice Tool For Teaching About Computers

This item has limited interest at best for my readers, but since we have teachers in our user groups, I am including it. Some larger user groups also have hardware SIGs, some of which are

structured and might be interested in this product, although it may be too costly for a SIG. While browsing through the “Association For Technical And Education Show,” I saw many types of training stations, and this one caught my eye. It is a “Personal Computer Training Station” with the motherboard, keyboard and some other components mounted on the top, easily accessible right before your eyes. Pull out a drawer and you will find the drives, which can be snapped out of their respective holders and quickly unplugged. It has a custom-built 350-watt UL power supply and supports AT/ATX/P4 motherboards. It also offers high-speed hard drive duplication capability. This is a sort of breadbox type workstation, and everything is very handy. Go to <<http://www.atp-p51.com>> where you can get more information and pictures of the product. The guy said he was unable to offer a deal because he depends on distributors.

Opt Out Of Spyware

According to Kim Komando, the Network Advertising Initiative, <<http://www.networkadvertising.org>> helps you drop both DoubleClick and Avenue A Inc., known for spyware. I haven’t tried it yet.

Accidentally Deleted Those Pictures?

Don’t worry, if you were using your digital camera and, with a slip of the finger, you deleted something from your Smart Media or Compact Flash Card that you later want, here is the answer. Go to <http://www.z-a-recovery.com/digital_image_recovery.htm> and download Zero Assumption Digital Image Recovery at no cost to you. Even though it says no image is there, if it used to be there, this program will recover it. Thank God for freebies, and

for Bob Schuchman of San Diego PC UG who wrote about this one some time ago in their newsletter.

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.

DVD Rot—A Possible Urban Legend in the Making

By Ira Wilsker

Many of you have recently read or heard in the mass media that our recorded CDs and DVDs have a much shorter life expectancy than the century originally predicted. The media was rife with horror stories about prized collections of CD based music deteriorating to the point of near uselessness, and how our DVDs will also deteriorate in the same fashion, much more rapidly than what we have been told to expect. The terms used in the recent mass media stories have referred to this rapid deterioration of discs as “CD Rot” and “DVD Rot,” where the layers of the disc holding the data deteriorates to the point of declining functionality or failure. In one well publicized case in early May, a collector of music CDs found that as many as 20

percent of his 2000 disc collection, many dating back to the 1980's, had developed "CD Rot." This is where the data layer on the CDs flakes off, resulting in a loss of data from the discs. To set the record straight, in this case, the CDs had been stored in a cabin in Corvallis, Oregon, heated by a wood burning stove, and not properly climate controlled.

These reports have caused some concern about the long term archival use of CDs and DVDs as media for storing critical data. I recently received an inquiry from a business that archives its critical data to name-brand CDs on a regular basis, and there was fresh concern about the longevity of its critical files, which were regularly backed up and stored in multiple locations. A listener to my radio show expressed concern about his cherished family videos, which had all been recently recorded to DVD discs, and wanted to know if there was a better, more permanent way to retain his precious family history. These concerns are but a microcosm of those expressed on an international basis following the recent media reports.

The good news is that with proper care, it is likely that decent quality CD and DVD discs will adequately last to meet reasonable archival needs. In terms of "DVD Rot," despite the exhortations of some, there has only been one documented case of such DVD failure. In the 1980's some of the earliest DVD discs produced by one manufacturer did have such problems, but these discs were not manufactured to the standardized "DVD Forum" specifications; instead they were made like the obsolescent "laser discs." The media was poorly manufactured, and

sold in bulk to replicators in Australia and the Far East. These inferior DVD discs developed the condition known today as "DVD Rot," which resulted in the loss of the data recorded on the discs. None of these substandard discs was ever shipped to the U.S. or Europe. News of these failures rapidly spread, and like many urban legends, tends to reappear every few years, resulting in a new wave of alleged rot in newer CDs and DVDs. The uproar about the longevity of CD and DVD discs has caused the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to start objective testing of the media to determine its likely useful lifetime.

In a recent release from an industry representative titled "Set the Record Straight: Fact – CDs and DVDs will not rot," there is a report from an analyst and writer, Don Labriola, who researched the controversy. He found only the one documented case mentioned above, where DVDs failed in that manner. He also found that the major manufacturers of DVD and CD media, such as Verbatim, Maxell, and Mitsubishi Chemical have steadily implemented new technologies and enhancements to improve the quality and longevity of the media. Generally, the major manufacturers still claim that quality media manufactured over the past four to five years should have a useful life of at least a century, as long as the discs are stored and treated properly. While the lesser known "no name" manufacturers of media may not be as innovative as the major makers, many of the well established types of media, such as the 24x CDs, and 2x DVDs will likely last, again with reasonable care. There are still some off-brand manufacturers that knowingly

produce inferior media that is not properly assembled, and where the layers come apart, resulting in oxidation of the data layer, but not the “rot” referred to in the mass media. Still, with proper care, even these inferior sub-standard discs will likely last.

The recordable disc industry has published some common sense rules to help ensure the longevity and durability of CD and DVD media:

1. Don't bend and force the discs out of the jewel case. That can crack the protective layer, and oxidation can then occur

2. Don't worry about any minor scratches on the clear underside of the disc. The scratch has to be pretty deep to make your data unreadable.

3. The label side is the important protective area to keep intact. That means using a sharp pen is a no-no. If you are going to mark on the disc, use a water- or alcohol-based soft marker.

4. Store your discs—in their jewel cases—like your books, vertically.

5. If you're eating popcorn while watching your videos and want to change discs, wipe your hands vigorously on your pants or shirt before handling the discs and then only on the outer edges or the hub.

6. Store the discs so they aren't in direct sunlight, in a place that is dry and at relatively constant temperature. That means throwing them on the dash of your car or on the coffee table in front of the family room bay windows could have serious repercussions.

7. Wipe them off periodically with a clean, dry cloth.

Ira Wilsker is the APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for the Examiner in Beaumont, Texas,

and has two radio shows. He can be reached at <iwilsker@ih2000.net>.

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Security on Your PC: Extensions and Sending Files By Barbara Kreiss

There are times when you want to e-mail files to a colleague or friend to share important information. What used to be a simple matter of attaching a document, spreadsheet, or database to an e-mail and quickly sending information, has today become more of a problem. Recently, a colleague attempted to send an MS Access database file to me. Because of my security settings, it was rejected: I received the e-mail, stripped of its attachment.

Due to increased cyber criminal threats and attacks, the utopian vision of global harmony that the computing industry originally designed for, where everyone happily shared files and information, and everyone was honest and upright, now seems naive and shortsighted. A decade ago, no one worried about receiving attachments to their e-mails. Viruses and worms existed, but were seldom seen. Few people thought virus protection was necessary or indeed ever encountered a virus.

With the whole-hearted and enthusiastic embracing of the personal computer (PC), e-mail, and the World Wide Web by the public, security issues started to gain in importance as the industry grew. As more people used the technology, and the vulnerable computers grew exponentially, so did the incidences of cyber crimes and criminal hacking. It became incredibly easy to introduce a virus or worm by e-mail or other means and have it spread by social engineering (I Love You virus) and by taking advantage of people who did not update their software.

In order to grow the industry in the early days, the software manufacturers had focused on ease of use and additional features as the most important factors to develop for. They listened to what their customers wanted, and gave them the bells and whistles they asked for. As the security threat grew, however, the emphasis had to change. The open, share with everyone, gee-whiz features from the past are moving to a more closed cautious approach in the present.

So how do you send a database file to a friend without them having to lower their security settings? There is a way. MS Outlook and MS Outlook Express will accept text (.txt) files without a problem, so I told my colleague to change the file extension from "databasename.dbs" to a different "databasename.txt" and send it to me. After receiving it, I could easily change the extension back to what it was before, and (drum-roll, please), I would have the database without changing my security settings.

So she tried it. I am fortunate to have an ISP who filters for SPAM and also

aggressively filters for Viruses and Worms (even so, I update my own virus protection daily). However, in this case, the ISP's virus filter stripped the ".txt" attachment from the e-mail, and I received nothing but a virus warning! What had happened?

After some trouble-shooting back and forth by e-mail, I determined that she had her version of Windows set to hide file extensions. When she tried to rename the file, she simply added ".txt" to the name. She then saw "databasename.txt" on her desktop, but because she couldn't see the file extension, the file was actually named "databasename.txt.dbs!" The ISP virus filter rightly saw that as a possible threat and dumped the file.

Having her file extensions hidden was also not a good idea from a security standpoint. She would never know if a virus program was hidden in files she looked at: for example, as in "filename.jpg.vbs" because she would not be able to see the ".vbs" (Visual Basic Script) extension. The file would look to her like "filename.jpg," and she might mistakenly open it, setting off a Trojan worm.

I suggested that she turn on her "view file extensions." Then she would be able to rename files correctly, and her system would be more secure at the same time.

Here's how you would do it in Windows 98:

Click Start

Click Settings

Click Folder Options

Click View Tab

Under Advanced Settings / Files and Folders: Click the box to put a check

in: "Remember each folder's view settings."

Uncheck the box next to: "Hide file extensions for known file types."
Click OK to confirm your selection.

Now after making the above changes, if my colleague looks at that copy of her database file on her desktop, she will see the extension as it truly is. If she renames it, she will see the correct extension and will also see the database icon change to the text icon. She may get a warning that she is about to do something terrible, (as in changing file extensions will cause the file not to open), but since she is working with a copy, she can ignore it. When she sends me the file, it will pass all the security checks both from my ISP and my system, and I will receive it successfully. I will then change the extension back to ".dbs," and ta-da! I will have the database file without compromising my over-all security. A quick and easy tip for everyone that needs to share a file: just make sure your virus scanner is up-to-date!

This article was first published in the Amador Computer Users Group Bytes & Bits Online, December 2002. Barbara Kreiss can be reached at <barbara@web-centric.net>.

How to Move Files to Your New PC By Ira Wilsker

I have had several inquiries asking how to move data files and programs from an old computer to a new one. The problem is actually more complicated than it might appear, because Windows uses an internal file called the registry to track the location, features, and settings of the hardware and software on the computer. Many people who

recently purchased or received new computers with Windows XP pre-installed, are replacing Windows 98 machines. Since there are many well documented hardware and software incompatibilities between the two operating systems, most programs and files cannot be copied to the new machine, as they will not work as intended.

A good first step is to make a backup of all critical data files. If the old computer has a CD burner, this would be the logical choice. Copy the "My Documents" directory to a CD (or multiple CDs if necessary), as well as the data directories used by other word processors, spreadsheets, databases, e-mail programs, tax and financial programs, photos, music, and videos to the CDs. Other files that should be copied to CDs are the settings for internet service providers (ISPs), address books, favorites (bookmarks), usernames, and passwords; these files are often overlooked in the copy process, creating hardship and additional work. In addition to providing a source of existing data files that can be used on the new computer, these CDs can also be an invaluable resource if a backup copy is ever needed. If the original program install discs are available, there is no need to copy the programs to CD, as the install process creates the proper directories and registry entries required for the programs to work.

Once the data files have been copied to CDs, the original programs can be installed on the new computer using the installation discs. One proviso, worth repeating, is that many programs, especially utilities that ran well on Windows 98, will not function properly

with XP. Windows XP has a poorly documented compatibility function to help software designed for earlier operating systems work on XP, but despite that, many older programs and utilities will still not work. After the programs have been installed on the new computer, the data files can then be copied from the CDs you created to the appropriate directories on the new computer. Care must be taken that data is put in the correct places, or the programs will not find it.

If this sounds like a hassle, it is. Last year, when I finally got a new XP computer for myself, it only took about 30 minutes to set it up, but many hours to get everything I wanted copied from my old Windows 98 machine to my new one. I burned over 20 data CDs, and spent the bulk of the time trying to copy the data to the correct locations on the XP machine.

Fortunately, there are several utilities on the market to automate, speed, and ease the process, but I did not use one then. With what I learned during the experience, I would not do the process manually, but would use one of the utilities instead. One that I recently used on another system is “PC Relocator,” available at several of the local electronics stores, online software sellers, or direct from the publisher at www.alohabob.com. According to published reports, PC Relocator has been the #1 selling PC migration utility every year since 2001. Available in a basic version or by download for about \$30, or there is an “ultra” version that includes two different sets of high speed transfer cables for about \$70. PC Relocator more than justifies its cost in time savings, function, and aggravation.

The PC Relocator software is installed on both computers, and will work on versions of Windows from 95 to XP. The destination computer must either be the same or newer operating system than what is on the older source computer. The computers are connected to an existing network connection, a standard bidirectional parallel cable, or the special USB or high speed bidirectional parallel cables that are included with the “ultra” package. USB is generally not compatible with Windows 95 or NT. The software then scans the old computer, and creates a menu of programs and data that can be selected for transfer, as well as settings, and data files. Any programs that may have conflicts or other problems on the new computer are flagged by PC Relocator for special attention. It should be noted that nothing is deleted from the old computer. The selected programs and files from the old computer, including their directories and registry entries, are then migrated to the new computer. The method of connection utilized determines the speed of the transfer; a common bidirectional parallel cable will move a gigabyte in 2 to 5 hours, while the special USB or high speed parallel cable (included in the ultra package) will move a gigabyte in less than an hour. If the computers can be connected via a network, transfers can be as fast as 15 minutes per gigabyte. Some local electronics stores will perform the service with their store copy of PC Relocator at a flat rate of \$59.95.

If I had PC Relocator a year ago when I set up my XP machine, I could have saved days of time, and lots of frustrations.

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Small Office, Home Office Ethernet Networks

By John Woody

The most common network technology being used in Small Office, Home Office (SOHO) today is the Ethernet standard. Ethernet was originally designed by Xerox and later was refined through the IEEE 802.3 series standards. They are becoming the “standard” for Local Area Networks (LAN) for individuals and small office networks. Ethernet is fairly easy to understand and use. Note, I said fairly easy to use. Ethernet technology is easy once the user has some understanding of what the Ethernet network hardware and software components do.

We need to start by defining what a standard is. Standards in the computer industry are used to define how the computer hardware and software work together. The standard defines the specifications of how the components are to be designed and assembled so that they work together. Standards assure compatibility, so that multiple hardware components will be able to work together. The standard spells out how the data is to be handled at each level as it passes through the computer in its movement to the receiver. In the beginning of networking, these standards were usually proprietary to the manufacturer of the hardware and software. Novell, ARCNET, token ring, and Banyan began in this fashion. The user had to have network hardware and a network operating system that met the network manufacturer’s specifications in order to use it. Networks between these manufacturers

usually did not communicate to each other. The protocols that controlled the data flow were only good for use with the proprietary network operating system. The Ethernet protocols follow this same route.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) defines a LAN as:

A datacomm system allowing a number of independent devices to communicate directly with each other, within a moderately sized geographic area, over a physical communications channel of moderate data rates.

The Ethernet series standards were developed by IEEE to meet the need of this device communication in local areas. Personal computers that communicate are usually in a local area, a room, a building, an office complex, or for our purposes, two or more computers at home or in a small office. The typical Ethernet LAN is used to share access to data or equipment such as storage devices. The individual hard disk drive (HDD) in each computer can be shared, so that all the users on the network can access it. Each computer or host on the network can access the files located on another computer depending on the rights and permissions given to the file being used.

LANs also allow users to share devices such as printers. One printer connected to a computer or directly to the network can be used by all the hosts on the network. This is done by sharing the device. Multiple print jobs can be done by that shared printer. A print queue, generated to hold the print jobs, is usually established to keep the print jobs in order for printing. There are some devices, printers, scanners, and storage devices, that are “network

ready.” Network ready means that the device has a Network Interface Card (NIC) in it to attach directly to the network. Ethernet networks are fully capable of handling shared printing services.

LANs typically are used as message traffic controllers for the users on the network. E-mail from one user to another on the network is provided through electronic mail exchange services. These services include editing and formatting aids such as “Outlook Express” in the Windows OS series. Individual and group addressing capabilities and message notification are usually included. The Internet, which is another network, has e-mail capabilities, and there are many e-mail applications such as Eudora, Outlook, or Outlook Express that can be used here as well. Ethernet networks handle these services just as any other network would.

LANs are used in many ways: one, data transmission that could be sent at low speeds, i.e, small files; or two, very large files that require the LAN high speed bandwidth. One of the basic measures of any network is the speed or bandwidth at which it transmits its data. This speed is usually measured as bits per second (bps). As many of us remember, 300 baud, or 300 bps, using our analog Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) modems was really fast. Then the speed moved to 9600 bps, to 10 Mbps, to 100 Mbps, as the transmission capabilities of computer networks increased in the past decade. By the way, that 300 baud analog modem was transmitting on a network of sorts. The Ethernet standards call for data rates from 1 to 100 Mbps.

A network consists of several components and software utilities. The

basic physical components are computing devices and cabling. The computing devices are known as nodes or hosts. The basic device in the computing component is the Network Interface Card (NIC). The NIC is the interface between the computer and the cabling and has the capability of sending and receiving the packets of data that are structured by the Ethernet protocol. Each NIC has an individually assigned address by its manufacturer that is associated with the addressing scheme in the network protocol. This allows each NIC to send and receive data addressed to it. Ethernet follows these standards and protocols.

The cabling is the second basic physical component in the network that must be available for the network to function. The cabling ties the nodes or hosts together and provides the communication medium for data movement. The Ethernet standard works on twisted pair telephone cable, coaxial cable, and fiber optics cable. The NIC being used in the network must be compatible with the type of cable being used. By far, the twisted pair cabling is now favored in the SOHO environment. Coaxial cable has been used in token ring networks and as backbone cabling in large networks. Fiber optics is used extensively for backbone cabling in large networks and for internetworks. The Ethernet standard specifies a maximum cable length of 100 meters, 330 feet. This is more than adequate for most SOHO Ethernet environments.

Most SOHO Ethernet networks use unshielded twisted pair (UTP) Category 5 (Cat 5) communication cable. The Cat 5 cable consists of four twisted pairs of wire, usually solid copper 22 AWG insulated wire. The four twisted pairs

are enclosed in a protective sheath or jacket. Cat 5 UTP cable is easy to install and terminate. Cable termination is very important. Each cable end must be terminated in a communication plug. These plugs look like a telephone wire plug, but are larger to accommodate eight wires instead of four. The name for these plugs is RJ45. The eight individual wires are inserted into the plug in a specific order to insure communication. The Cat 5 UTP cable and RJ45 plugs can be purchased in bulk so that the cabling installation can be custom to the network. Or ready made Cat 5 UTP cable can be purchased in the lengths that closely fit the network. Of course, the NICs installed in the computers must be able to receive the RJ 45 cable plugs.

Most NICs for Ethernet networks use the RJ45 jacks that receive the RJ45 plugs. In the recent past, many Ethernet NICs had both RJ45 jacks and BNC connectors for coaxial cable. The SOHO network has nearly completely gotten away from using coaxial cable.

The network topology, the layout technique, must be considered in the Ethernet SOHO environment. The topology determines how the computers will be connected. Ethernet relies on a Star configuration. Each node in the network connects to a central hub. This hub is a physical device. It usually requires electrical power. It has RJ45 jacks to receive each of the cables from the nodes in the network. The jacks or ports as they are called, are in multiples of two, usually four, eight, sixteen or larger, depending on the number of nodes in the network. The hub acts as a passive communication traffic manager, receiving and sending the network communication to all other nodes. A

smart version of the Ethernet hub, called a switch, does understand the addressing scheme in the network and can route network traffic to the proper address.

Other specialized network devices can be used in the Ethernet network to make it function more efficiently. Routers are one example of these devices. Ethernet routers can make the data sending and receiving process function more easily.

Each computer in the network functions in accordance with the role assigned to it. Some networks act as peer-to-peer communication devices. In peer-to-peer networks, each node is equal to all other nodes and must keep track of every other computer to keep the addressing scheme straight. This is an acceptable way to use the network as long as the nodes are ten or less. In most serious networks, the best way to set up its functioning is to make at least one of the computers function as a server. Servers do just that, they provide services such as e-mail exchange, printing, and data storage to other computers called clients. The Ethernet standard handles these arrangements.

The network must have a 'network ready' operating system to complete the communication processing between the nodes in the network. Within this OS are communication protocols that handle the data flow within the computer and in its transmission process. The protocol most commonly used today is the Transmission Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol (TCP/IP). TCP/IP processes within the OS and is hardware independent. It transmits over Ethernet. TCP/IP handles the addressing and packet assembly of data that is to be transmitted on the sending computer and receives the data packets on the

receiving computer. Windows 9X series, Windows NT/2000/XP, Apple, UNIX, and Linux, to name a few network-ready OSs can use TCP/IP over Ethernet networks.

Summary

The Ethernet standard has become the network specification of choice for SOHO networks because of its ease of understanding and implementation. The standard is well tested and contains very few problems. It is easily deployed in the SOHO network. Vendors have provided a very good mix of hardware that is fully capable of operating in the SOHO network. The Ethernet components are stock items at computer stores. The vendors have done a relatively good job of providing working drivers to set the components such as Ethernet NICs in today's Windows and other OSs. The other half of the Ethernet network, cabling, is also readily available at computer stores as shelf merchandise.

Ethernet works over wireless networks as well. The NICs and Access Points for the wireless networks usually plug into Ethernet RJ45 cable connections for routers and modems. I have a wireless Access Point in my home network.

The actual detailed setup may have some NIC driver problems, or the router may require some special setup, but, for the most part, an Ethernet network can easily be setup in the SOHO environment.

John Woody is a network communications consultant and specializes in small office, home office networks, training, setup, and Internet connectivity. He is a past president of the Alamo PC Organization. Contact him at <netadmin@alamopc.org>.

What New Technology Can Do For You

By Patrick Suarez

Few people beat Linux's drum harder than I did last year, and I found a Linux distribution that makes installation and, more important, updates and upgrades a snap. It is not based on "dependencies" (files that depend on the presence of other files to load or work), so the update path is not the minefield that the mainstream distributions made it. It is based on Debian, a Linux distribution that is mostly the province of hard core Linux geeks. It is called Libranet, a user-friendly form of Debian. Check it out at <<http://www.libranet.com>>.

As if the world needed yet another reason to migrate to the Linux desktop, Microsoft and some of the scarier factions of the federal government are giving us a dilly in an upcoming technology called Palladium. This is, at its core, snoop technology that keeps an eye on what you do and use on your PC (pretty much removing the "personal" from the acronym). Microsoft will weave Palladium into upcoming versions of Windows and turn it "off" by default. But it won't stay off for long, because mainstream application vendor's wares won't work unless it's activated.

Say goodbye to mixing your own MP3 collections. If Palladium thinks an application is not correctly licensed, it will disable it. Microsoft claims that Palladium will cut down on spam, but this will come at the expense of examining your e-mail. No thanks, Microsoft.

The cell phone explosion has reached 128 million. This year saw

serious PDA/cellphone introduction. It's amazing to see hordes of people from all walks of life poking at these things one minute, as if trying to spear some tiny gremlin scooting about the PDA's surface, then planting them in their ears and jabbering away the next.

Cell phones have taken a lot of blame for car accidents, but I wonder how many more accidents have been caused by fiddling with CDs and radios, rubber necking, and trying to negotiate a burger, fries, and drink. One can imagine the reaction by the fast food lobby if states banned eating in cars.

Solve this cell phone problem by buying one that has a speakerphone capability. Most cell phone companies offer them. Plop it on the seat next to you as you keep both hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road ahead.

Digital cameras have been adding pixels, but wait! At long last, razor-sharp (we're talking Kodachrome quality here) images will come to mid-range priced cameras. Right now, you can't get tremendous clarity without resorting to 4 or 5 megapixel cameras. But they are expensive and don't really solve the sharpness problem. They divvy up the available pixels into thirds (red, green, blue), diminishing sharpness. Foveon at <http://www.foveon.com> has come to the rescue with X3 technology that ingeniously triples pixel capability without tripling the number of pixels. In a 4 megapixel camera, 1.3 million pixels go to red pixels, 1.3 million pixels go to blue pixels and 1.3 million pixels go to green pixels. With X3, you get 4 million red, 4 million blue, and 4 million green pixels, in layers, like pancakes. Neat trick. This technology will flower in the future and put a serious dent into

the argument that you still need film for the last word in sharpness.

The movie studios have made impressive strides in opening their old libraries to DVD. Even with some obvious omissions (where is "Inherit the Wind," for example), we film buffs can thank them for the releases to date and look forward to more.

Disney has spooled out much of its catalog, but it scored a bulls eye earlier this month by releasing possibly the funniest material it ever made, the Goofy "Art of" and "How to" shorts from the 1940s and 1950s. Those familiar with these little masterpieces remember the hilarious mix of a serious voice describing the careful steps to mastering skiing or golf, while watching Goofy massacre not only those steps but also, nearly, himself. We are talking laugh-until-you-can't-breath funny here. Somewhere, Uncle Walter is smiling.

Reading. Remember reading? You can visit the popular online bookstores, or you can get the great classics for free. Yes, free. Visit the Gutenberg Project <http://promo.net/pg/> and rediscover the wonderful thoughts and styles that laid the foundation for today's authors. Let today's technology take you back to another time.

We live in a strange world of high technology that opens possibilities that used to reside only in comic books and science fiction novels. At the same time, we are living with the consequences of that technology that expose us to equally unimagined dangers. It's up to us to maximize the positive and minimize the negative.

Patrick Suarez is a past Board Member of the Dayton Microcomputer Association and can be reached at psuarez@gemair.com.

Soft-Wear Review

By Charles Grover

When I became active on our users' group board I heard more experienced officers emphasize how important it is that people who win softwear as door prizes write reviews. Recently I won an item of softwear; here is my review.

On the front of the soft-wear are two logos from the <www.msn.com> web page. While the shape and arrangement of the "msn" logo and stylized butterfly, and even placement of the TM symbols, appear accurate, the colors are not clear and bright, especially where the upper and lower butterfly wings are superimposed. To the left, the web site logo clearly has a blue upper wing and a yellow-green lower wing overlapping to produce a darker green color. To the right a rust-red upper wing and an earthy yellow overlap to make orange. On the soft-wear, however, the greens are less distinguishable, and the red and orange are not much different. Actually, I think it is better looking on the soft-wear, less garish, more tasteful. But it is not a faithful copy. I will say this, however. The resolution of the image on the soft-wear is much higher. Enlarge the image from the web site and the edges go all fuzzy. At the same scale, the printing on the soft-wear is sharp.

I don't know who is responsible for this soft-wear and its features. Despite the msn.com logos on the soft-wear, the label inside the neck band says "Jerzees Activewear." The label has a different logo featuring a stylized letter "Z," and a line stating, "heavyweight cotton." Looks like there is some sort of subcontracting or marketing arrangement going on here.

Anyway, the soft-wear has the shortest documentation imaginable, even though it is given in Spanish and French as well as English. It all fits on another sewn-in label only about 4 mm wide and less than 5 mm high. In its entirety, the English documentation reads, "Machine wash warm with like colors. Only non-chlorine bleach when needed. Tumble dry low. Do not iron or dry clean emblem." Across the top of the documentation label is a set of cryptic symbols, what I think of as international laundry marks. There is something like a tub of water with two dots inside, a triangle with diagonal stripes, and what I take to be a drier with one dot in it. I guess the dots have to do with temperature, and the striped triangle is some sort of anti-chlorine protest sign. I never have been quite sure of these funny marks that show up on lots of soft-wear nowadays. Clear language, confusing symbols.

Here is another discovery. At the bottom of the documentation is an address in Alabama. That's a long way from Redmond, Washington. Another indication that msn or MS did not actually originate this soft-wear.

The soft-wear was not shrink-wrapped. It looked a little dusty, so I didn't try it on until it had been machine washed warm and tumble dried low. Without any ironing it is wrinkled a bit—but who wants to iron such things?

I tried on the soft-wear for a while. Mostly it is soft, but it felt a little scratchy around the neck. Why does soft-wear so often seem to get you in the neck? Perhaps more machine washing warm and tumble drying low will make it a bit softer—time will tell.

I really can't make any recommendations about this soft-wear.

Such soft-wear is so much a matter of personal taste and comfort. But what the heck—I can always put a free tee shirt to use.

Charles Grover is a member of the Rochester Computer Society, Inc., and he can be reached at <dgrover@frontiernet.net>.



BOARD MEETING

6/13/04

Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present:

President Gary DeNise, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier, and Members at Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m.

Old Business:

Treasurer Roger Gay reported that the bank balance is \$4949.09. SEMCO's membership stands at 83 with renewals due from Vic Charns, Johnathan Lodden, Sue Sullivan, Lawrence Chenault, Donald Clark, Jerry Comptois, Al Gruber, and James Thede.

Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Warner Mach \$13.68 for refreshments. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried.

New Business:

The Board discussed the advisability of and procedures for telephoning former members whose memberships had recently expired for purposes of encouraging them to renew their memberships. The general consensus was that making such contacts was a good idea, and it is appropriate for any officer or board member to do so.

Richard Jackson suggested that the loss of members may be due to SEMCO not meeting the needs of its members. He will develop a survey to collect data on members' needs and request volunteers to become more active.

Richard Jackson suggested that it would be less costly if the DATA BUS were sent to the members electronically. A discussion followed, but no action was taken.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Gary DeNise seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

ABOUT GROWING OLDER

1. Eventually you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.
2. The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.
3. I don't try to turn back my odometer. I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way, and some of the roads weren't paved.
4. One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.
5. Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

Will Rogers, Sage

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.

ACROSS

- 1 Dutch painter Gerard ____
 4 Not just "play"
 7 Made of grated potato
 12 Queen of Scots
 13 Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm
 used in India for writing paper
 14 Egyptian dam
 15 Deist
 17 Make big letters
 18 UC Berkeley
 19 Exist
 21 A stimulus that provides information about
 what to do
 22 The longest division of geological time
 24 Hawaiian dish of taro root pounded to a
 paste and often allowed to ferment
 25 Jan Van der ___, Dutch painter
 26 History women
 27 Having yellowish rind
 29 Marmalade brand
 31 An abnormal structural change in a bodily part
 35 Dispose
 37 Tag the base runner to get him out
 38 Petty quarrel
 41 Tai
 42 This (Spanish)
 43 Go a step east
 44 Cony
 45 Approached
 46 Slake
 48 A way to single out
 52 George ___, English actor 1558
 53 A major division of geological time
 54 A place to do scientific research
 55 Red deers
 56 Make fun of
 57 Women's ___ movement

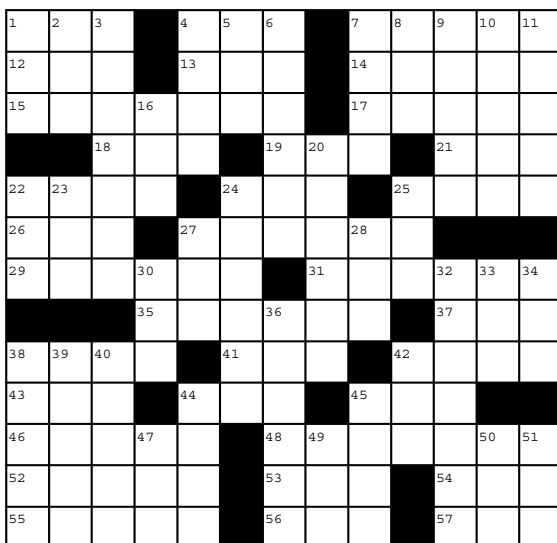
DOWN

- 1 Father
 2 The smallest whole number
 3 Imaginary being
 4 Weight unit
 5 ___ Lilly, drug company
 6 Cocoa beans
 7 Emit coherent radiation
 8 The residue when something is
 burned
 9 Doubly
 10 Zambian river
 11 Next line, please
 16 Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
 20 Island in Venice
 22 State or say further
 23 Cologne

- 24 Dish
 25 Milliampere
 27 After B
 28 Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects
 including social and solitary species
 30 Insecticide
 32 Put in place
 33 Annual grass of Europe and N Africa
 34 The compass point that is one point east
 (clockwise) of due north
 36 More comfortable
 38 Spherical gram-positive parasitic bacteria
 that tend to form irregular colonies
 39 Pistil bracts
 40 More competent
 42 Fatty-fleshed fish that migrates between salt
 and fresh water
 44 In a way, changes color
 45 Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
 47 Another choice
 49 California think tank
 50 A citizen of Thailand
 51 The outward flow of the tide

**Letter From The Editor**

I put six computer terms in the puzzle.
 Find my words; let me know by e-mail
 by 7/17/04; you'll get a certificate that
 may be exchanged for an extra door
 prize ticket at a future meeting. Complete
 answer and winners next month.



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach



July 11: PDA Controlled Firefighting Robot. Bill Osmer, Product Engineering Manager at SSI Technologies, will demonstrate a small firefighting robot that he developed that is controlled by a Palm PDA.



SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

July 11: Wacom Graphic Tablet. SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will discuss and demonstrate his new graphic tablet and photo editing software.

June Meeting Attendance: 22

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Beth Fordyce is accepting Macintosh computers, components, peripherals, manuals, and software (working or broken) for St. Gerard School

PreK–8th grade, 175-200 students for computer science classes.

Contact Beth

734/453-0349 10am–10pm or

bfordyce@sbcglobal.net

You may also contact the school
W-Th-F, 1-4 pm: Maurice Roberts
19900 Evergreen, Detroit
(Just south of 8 Mile Road)
313/533-4353

NOVICE-IBM GROUP **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

July 11: Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

August 2: 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.**

August 2004 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)

SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun, July 18, 11:59 p.m.

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 \(address Page 2\)](#).

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)

July 24–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 call 313-341-8855.

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

No Meetings in July or August; Boat Trip August 4. Ron Walters, 810-679-4144. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>.

DCOM Computer Club

July 9–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 Meetings in July or August <<http://www.dpug.org>>.

FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)

July 13–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

July 25–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: Converting tapes & LPs to CDs & iTunes.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

July 17–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)

July 15–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

July 8–(2nd Thur), MAC SIG; July 8–(2nd Thur), Golden Masters SIG; July 15–(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 <carlpen@aol.com>. Web: <<http://www.themichiganapple.com>>. Topic: Apple's WWDC Updates and Shareware.

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)

No Meetings in July or August, 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

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

SPECIAL MEMBER BENEFIT

Telesthetic

ISP Service

- \$5.95 per month plus \$5 setup fee
- Rate for SEMCO members only
- Unlimited hours
- Billing by e-mail, credit card

Long Distance Phone Service

- Without ISP service: \$2.95/month plus usage charge
- 4.5cents/min 24/7 (plus taxes, etc.)
- Billing plus call detail by e-mail
- 30 sec minimum, then 6 sec billing increment
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Contact SEMCO member John Lodden or Customer Service <service@telesthetic.com> or 1-800-807-4515.

SEMCO has arranged for this offer solely as a benefit for its members. Telesthetic, LLC is an independent business, and SEMCO does not act for Telesthetic as agent or in any other capacity. SEMCO makes no representations or warranties as to the services provided by Telesthetic and expressly disclaims any and all warranties and liability.



JUNE REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator
Betty MacKenzie
Roland Maki
Carol Sanzi

Your **SEMCO** membership
card is good for a **\$1 discount** (not
valid with any other offer) on
admission to

A1-Super Computer Sales
shows. See

www.a1-supercomputersales.com

or www.a1scs.com

for show schedule.

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of members willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier

AutoCAD: Comptois, Gay

Genealogy: Cook

IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Gay, Yuhasz

Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

MS Office for Windows: Callow

MS Word: Clyne

Networking: Callow

Novell Network: Yuhasz

Quicken: Clyne, Gay

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 scCook48227@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—July/August

**ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN**

July 11—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: PDA Controlled Firefighting Robot**. Bill Osmer, Product Engineering Manager at SSI Technologies will demonstrate a small firefighting robot that he developed which is controlled by a Palm PDA.

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.

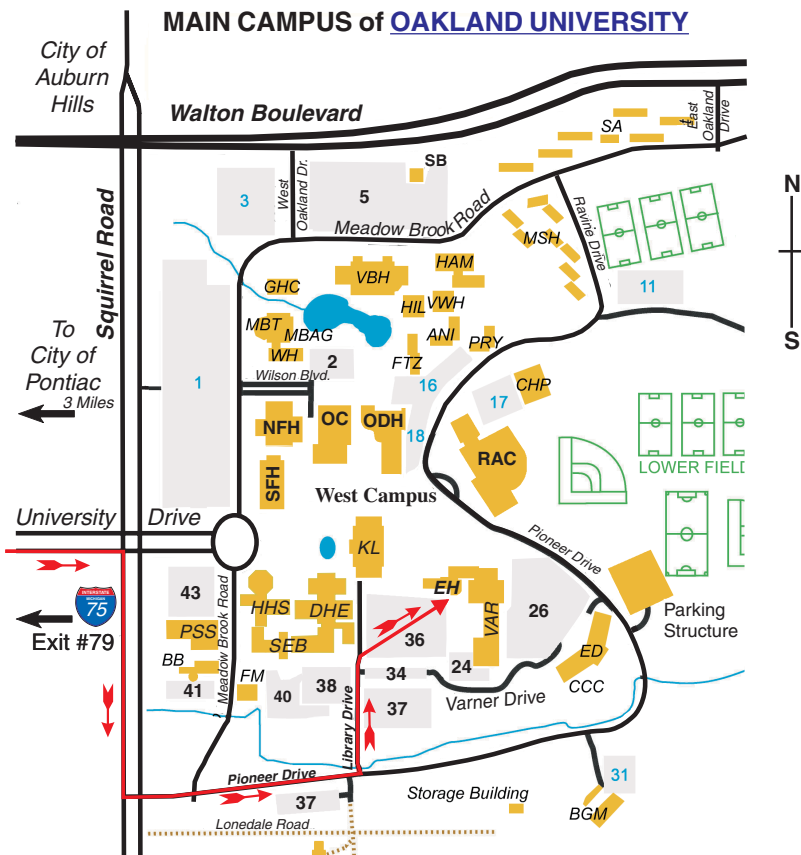
August 2—MONDAY, 6:45 pm (Meets first Monday), SIG-ADVANCED Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway: take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd. and turn right. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing**.

August 8—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)



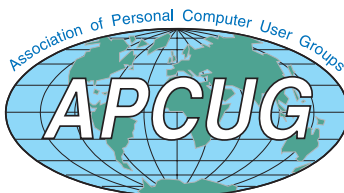
MAP LEGEND

- 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.

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

SEMCO (future meetings)

July 11

August 8

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Helping People for the 21st Century**