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Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

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SEMCO OFFICERS

President	Gary DeNise	(248) 634-7514
Vice President	Richard Jackson	(248) 546-3694
Secretary	Carol Sanzi	(586) 739-7256
Treasurer	Roger Gay	(248) 641-7799
Members at Large of the Board of Directors		
	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
	Chuck Moery	keypounder@juno.com

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Publications Committee Chair	Bill Agnew	(586) 752-2227
Editor	Bill Agnew	(586) 752-2227
Associate Editor	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
Publisher	Phil "Vic" Charns	(248) 398-4465

SIG (SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP) CHAIRPERSONS

SIG-IBM: CoChairman	Tom Callow	(248) 642-1920 (9-5)
CoChairman	Warner Mach	(313) 326-0733
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NOVICE-IBM GROUP	Rotating Hosts	
SIG-ADVANCED	Franz Breidenich	(248) 398-3359

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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**

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SEMCO MEETINGS

Sunday, November 14, 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 Cheapstake" Click

I can hardly believe I've been writing this column for ten years now and have never missed a month. I never dreamed it would end up being so widely used. It all started when a group of us from Central Florida Computer Society traveled to attend the 1994 FACUG fall conference in Cocoa, FL. During our travel time, the president at that time (Miguel McCormick) told me the group was getting many special offers, and he didn't have time to announce them at meetings. He asked if I would mind putting them together as an article for the newsletter if he channeled them all to me. Hesitantly, I agreed since Miguel has always worked hard for the group, but I knew nothing about writing articles.

I received much criticism for the first column from the desktop publishing SIG I attended in an effort to help me improve it. They said nobody would read it the way I was writing it. I was having no luck understanding techniques to improve it when e-mail

arrived from two editors, because of newsletter exchanges, asking if they could reprint it. Since many offers were time sensitive, I offered to put those editors on a list. I originally sent the column to editors individually for some time because I knew nothing about BCC or CC, or even how to attach a file to e-mail. That first column had 22 special offers in it. I also started giving it to Space Coast PCUG, since I was also a member there. Surprisingly, the third editor to ask for the column was from Portland, Oregon PCUG, and I was then published from coast to coast, but in just three newsletters. After three months of trying to improve it, with no success, my friends in the DTP SIG finally remarked that, since it seemed to be working, just forget improving it.

A few editors feel that this is the "deals" column and should only contain deals, nothing else. Two editors have always felt the column is over worded. They insist that all you need is the name of the product, the price, and ordering procedure, thus reducing it to about three paragraphs. I've always felt that those editors were missing what seemed to make it work. I often get feedback from my personal comments. Most editors feel differently and often e-mail me that their readers enjoy the column however I write it, which is always good to hear.

One problem lately is with myself. I don't devote the additional time required these days to dig up deals, and I also get turned down more, along with just no response, even though I had talked to them at a show. Items I find in UG newsletters and suggestions sent by editors help. I still have a few leads that I plan to follow up, but I'm writing the column from month to month, seeing

where it leads. I also now use occasional unknown products that I receive announcements for, if they offer a discount. I still get a lot of support from many editors wanting me to continue. Many editors depend on the DealsGuy column, and for a very few, my column is the heart of their newsletters along with the groups' member news. One thing seems certain though, and that is that the DealsGuy column is on borrowed time.

You need a tough skin to do this job, because there is no way to please everybody. Complaints seldom come from the readers though, and those that do are usually because of a problem. However, editor's complaints sometimes lead to changes. Interesting, that for the last few years though, the DealsGuy column has not been published in the original newsletter that started it all.

I'm presenting two great items that could be Christmas gifts, even for you. I'm excited about them both, and you'll love them.

Lets Understand The Weather Better

I love the "Ultimeter 100" and was able to put together a deal just in time for Christmas (what a great gift). I can't adequately describe this full-featured weather station, so check their Web site <<http://www.peatbros.com>>. I am just now learning everything about mine. It's certainly full-featured, and I'm having great fun. I installed it just hours before our latest hurricane, Jeanne, and spent more time checking the Ultimeter 100 data than checking the storm. It offers about any type of data and display you want, and recorded my highest wind gust at 66 mph, 9/26/04, at 10:05 am. I could have shown it in other units, as with all the data. Data can also be

accessed by phone line. I'm now working on a better mount and location for my rain gauge. Ultimeter 100 can be set to continuously scan wind speed, wind chill, temperature, today's rainfall, time and date, or just certain data. It also shows the wind direction. An alarm can be set for the danger of an impending flash flood, if your area is prone, or for other possible situations. A 9V-battery backup retains your data in the event of a power failure. Pushing a button will give you highs or lows for any of the last seven days, or for long term.

This deal is a scoop, since they are introducing a new feature, which is a "serial text" interface that works with your computer to view the weather station's accumulated data. Simply connect the serial cable, start Windows HyperTerminal on your computer; then, by pushing buttons on your weather station, quickly view data from the Ultimeter 100 system's memory for various time periods and format it as you like on your computer. The feed updates each minute.

For just \$199.00 you get the "Ultimeter 100" weather station (MSRP \$199.00) bundled with an indoor temperature sensor (MSRP \$12.95) and a 15' serial computer interface cable (MSRP \$20.00), both of which are normally optional. The unit does include the anemometer, wind vane, and other necessary cables. There are other peripherals, such as a self-emptying rain gage and "The Weather Picture" (a large digital display that can be read across the room), extensions for the cables, and more.

The Ultimeter 100 is the only product offered with the bundle, but obviously they have other models and

accessories to offer. Please mention the code “DealsGuy” when ordering this special \$199.00 bundle. E-mail them at <peetbros@peetbros.com>, or call them at 1-866-446-1216 or 1-321-206-6214. Shipping varies according to the dollar amount, but orders between \$200 and \$299 will cost \$15.75 S&H. If you're not convinced, call for their beautiful 10-page brochure that tells it all.

Your Badge Says It All

You may have seen digital badges at computer shows, as I have, and they took my eye. I bought one and have enjoyed mine. People comment when they see it, since it really stands out. It scrolls your message, which can be up to 118 characters, in red LED letters. You can vary the scrolling speed. Get more details at <<http://www.bannerbadge.com>>. There's a video there of the Banner Badge scrolling a message, but in person, it looks much better than on that video, according to my screen. You can order either a black or red one, and it comes with the programming kit. There is an optional USB-to-serial adapter, and the “Buddy” that will program it without your computer. The digital badge is a real eye-catcher and lots of fun.

Originally I purchased mine from another company and tried to make a deal with that company, but with no success. I consider them the losers. I later found this company, Banner Badge, in another show, and with much better prices. The Banner Badge guys were happy to give my readers a deal, which is 10% off the posted prices on the Web site. Unfortunately there's no way to enter a price code for the DealsGuy price when ordering so you'll have to send them an e-mail at <info@bannerbadge.com> or call them

at 1-772-571-9944, and be sure to mention DealsGuy to get the 10% discount. What a great Christmas gift! Don't forget to order extra batteries at their low prices.

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 Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time in 2003. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.

Still in Doubt— Windows XP Service Pack 2

By Ira Wilsker

In a recent column I wrote about the problems that I suffered after I installed the much ballyhooed Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2). Despite following the troubleshooting and problem resolution instructions listed on Microsoft's Knowledge Base (a massive data base of Microsoft software problems and solutions), I was still unable to successfully reboot my computer. While frustrated, I was not in total despair, as I had a full current

backup of my hard drive stored safely on my external hard drive, an imperative precaution that cannot be understated.

Despite running the XP system restore, and normally reliable third party programs, such as one of my favorites, WinRescueXP, my computer would still not boot following the install of SP2. Fortunately, I had the original XP CD that came with my computer. I thought that a fresh install of XP, and then a restore from my recent backup would be in order, a process that I did not relish. I inserted my original XP CD into the drive, restarted the computer, and booted with the CD. I selected the install option, clicked F8 to accept the Microsoft license, and then had an option of a full install, or a repair install. Since a repair install does not reformat the hard drive and does not wipe out programs and data files, but only performs a fresh install of XP, this was my obvious choice. Thirty-nine minutes later, my computer was up and running normally, with the original XP (Service Pack 1) installed. One note that users should be aware of is that many, but not all, OEM versions of XP on CD, typically those provided by a computer manufacturer that may or may not be labeled as XP, but may instead be labeled as “system restore” or “operating system,” may not offer a repair install, but only a destructive full install.

After successfully reinstalling XP, it was necessary to go to the update site at windowsupdate.microsoft.com and selectively re-download and install the critical security updates. Now my computer is up and running somewhat normally, with most of the patches downloaded and installed, excluding the SP2.

Now that I am back online and functioning with my primary desktop computer, I decided to see how often my SP2 problems occurred. Anecdotal evidence published in a variety of tomes stated that from 5% to 20% of SP2 updates failed for a variety of reasons.

As I was preparing to type this column, I received my October copy of “Scot Finne’s Newsletter” (you can find it at www.scotsnewsletter.com), and with not much surprise was greeted with the headline “XP SERVICE PACK 2 DECISIONS,” which detailed the many problems that XP users had when installing XP SP2. According to the newsletter, “The two main reasons not to install XP SP2, at least not right away, are: 1. Installation Woes and Other Problems; 2. Web Browsing, E-mail, and Other Application Inconveniences.”

After explaining in detail the advantages and disadvantages of SP2, as well as describing who should and should not install SP2, Scot compiles a list of 60 official Microsoft Knowledge Base documents that acknowledge the situation, and provide tips and patches to allow the successful installation of SP2. The list, which you can find at www.scotsnewsletter.com/best_of_xpsp2links.htm is comprehensive, and is broken down into a logical series of topics: Pre-Install Must Reading, Installation Issues, SP2 Problems/Solutions, Uninstalling SP2, Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, Windows Firewall, Networking/Wireless, Miscellaneous, and Microsoft Knowledge Base Searches. I strongly encourage all XP users, whether or not they have installed XP SP2, to review this list, as it contains much helpful information. For example, in the Pre-Install section is a list of programs,

including popular name-brand utilities, that cease to function properly after SP2 is installed. There are several issues that may need to be rectified prior to installing SP2 in order to improve the chances of a successful install.

The Installation Issues and SP2 Problems/Solutions segments describe in detail, and propose solutions or provide patches for, the majority of installation failures, such as the one that I experienced.

With the proverbial 20/20 hindsight, I wish that I had seen this list prior to installing my SP2, and had the benefit of its insights. When all else fails, the proper ways to uninstall SP2, and restore the prior versions is described, another valuable piece of information that may save many users a lot of time and aggravation.

After SP2 is successfully installed, many users have problems with the new features and improvements in the newly upgraded XP. Some of the most common problems have to do with the improved and “on by default” XP firewall, which may restrict some legitimate programs from connecting to the internet, and may also conflict with the usually superior third-party firewalls that all of us should be using. Patches, fixes, and workarounds are detailed on Scot’s list.

Other documented problems include the inability of Outlook Express to handle attachments and graphics, changes to Internet Explorer, and networking issues. All of these are well covered in Scot’s list.

Now that I have information available that I was previously unaware of, thanks to Scot Finnie, and a variety of tips, hints, and patches to ease the transition, courtesy of Microsoft, maybe

I will try again to install my SP2 CD. Of course, another full backup is in order, just in case.

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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Help! I’ve Been Hijacked

By Sherry Zorzi

Cajun Clickers Computer Club, Louisiana.

First it was viruses, worms, and spam. Then came Trojans spyware, and pop-ups. The newest scourge plaguing Internet surfers is browser hijackers, and one very nasty one is making the rounds causing all manner of grief.

Browser hijackers are malicious programs that change browser settings, usually altering designated default start and search pages. The newest versions are going beyond messing with your browser settings. One of the worst, called “Cool Web Search” is particularly hard to remove.

Symptoms

How can you tell you have a browser hijacker? If your start page is suddenly different, that’s a clue. Often the hijacker won’t let you change your start page

back to your preferred page. You might also notice a new “helper” toolbar added to your browser.

Another clue can be a changed search page. If you used to get MSN as your search page when you click the “Search” button, but now some other page is coming up, you’ve likely been hijacked.

Some of the hijackers will load a page that looks like Google, but isn’t really Google—a particularly dastardly trick. Many will give unexpected search results. You may search for some innocent topic and get lots of results that lead to porn sites. If you search on “spyware” or the name of a hijacker program, the browser may either freeze up, or give you only benign results, making it look like the hijacker program is a good thing.

Many folks who’ve been hijacked find that porn sites have been added to their favorites list. Some report pornographic files being downloaded. Some are directed to porn sites when mis-typing a web address (although this can happen without hijacking).

Other symptoms include pop-up ads, even though you’re running a pop-up stopper program. These pop-ups can appear more rapidly than you can close them and can freeze your system quickly. You may notice drastically reduced resources or messages that your system is low on resources or virtual memory. Or you may receive dramatically increased spam. Frequent lock-ups are a common complaint as is painfully slow performance.

Some of the hijackers can even disable your firewall, your anti-virus software, or your spyware killers. Or they can prevent anti-virus software and spyware detectors from being updated.

In the past, we were safe from most Internet threats as long as we kept our anti-virus software updated and ran a firewall. Running Ad-Aware or Spybot Search and Destroy once a week or so cleaned up any spyware that had crept in, but we never had much trouble. If we were smart enough not to download junk and not to open attachments, we were pretty safe. But times have changed and we must change our thinking too.

This recent rash of nasty stuff came in through a security hole in Microsoft Windows. Those who did not update Windows in a timely manner were sitting ducks for the Cool Web Search hijacker. From now on you must keep Windows up to date, especially with the so-called “critical updates.”

Cure

The newest browser hijackers are particularly difficult to remove. You can try the following, but be sure to follow the steps in order. If you don’t know what you’re doing, you should take the infected machine in to one of the local computer shops and let them fix it for you. It’s possible to mess your computer up really badly while trying to remove a hijacker!

1. If you’re running Windows ME, Windows 2000, or Windows XP, you must first turn off the system restore feature. Otherwise any problem you fix will just return when you reboot the computer. Search your Windows Help screens for instructions on how to disable System Restore for your version of Windows. Warning: You will lose all restore points you’ve previously made!

2. Download the Cwshredder tool from www.downloads.com or any of the many sites that make it available.

If you're infected with a hijacker, go to a non-infected machine to download your tools. Be sure you get the absolute latest version of Cwshredder, since it is updated every few days. New variants of these hijackers appear at an amazing rate, and you must have the latest Cwshredder to detect and clean them all.

3. Reboot your machine and run Cwshredder again.

4. Run Ad-aware. Be sure you update it first. If you don't already have Ad-aware, get it at <www.javasoftusa.com>.

5. Reboot your machine and run Ad-aware again.

6. Run Spybot Search & Destroy. Be sure to update it first. If you don't have Spybot Search & Destroy, get it at <www.safer-networking.org>.

7. Reboot your machine and run Spybot again.

8. If everything seems to be clean now, be sure to turn Windows System Restore back on!

Don't let a browser hijacker ruin your tech-life! Keep Windows updated. Install and run a firewall. Install, keep updated, and run anti-virus software. Install, update, and run spyware cleaners. And encourage Congress to nail these hijacking jerks!

Sherry Zorzi is secretary of Cajun Clickers Computer Club. She can be reached through the club's Web site at <www.clickers.org>.

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Keep Your Cool Your PC Cool, That Is By Ira Wilsker

Heat is one of the primary causes of premature computer and component failure. Today's microprocessors, video cards, hard drives, CD and DVD burners, memory, and other components produce much more heat than their earlier brethren. One simple indication of the amount of heat generated in today's newer computers is the power supply; older computers could run well with a 150 watt power supply, while many newer models utilize a 400 watt or larger power supply. While it is uncommon for computers to use all of the power capacity of the power supply, the immutable laws of physics state that much of the power used will be turned into heat, and heat can kill computer components.

Many newer motherboards and computers now come with some form of thermal monitor to inform the user of potentially damaging or dangerous overheating, and a device may even shutdown a computer unexpectedly if temperatures inside the computer get too high. If there is too much heat buildup, and the internal temperatures get too high, parts degrade or fail at a rapid rate. Expensive CPU chips, hard drives, memory, and video cards that fail are often the result of overheating. Sudden lockups and computer errors may be due to an overheated CPU chip. Our critical data may be lost forever if our hard drives overheat and fail. If our computers can be protected from overheating, not just will they last longer, but they may perform better.

Intel provides a free temperature monitoring utility for its motherboards

and chipsets that helps this problem. According to Intel, desktop Pentium IV chips work best when below 130 degrees F, may have problems at 150 degrees F, and may start to degrade or fail at that temperature or higher. AMD chips, such as the Athlon may suffer a similar fate from overheating. For this reason almost all modern CPU chips have an attached heat sink and fan. In order to improve thermal conductivity between the surface of the chip and the heat sink, a thermal grease substance is used between them. The purpose of a heat sink is to provide a greater surface area to enable the dissipation of heat into the surrounding air. Most CPU chip heat sinks are topped with a small fan to blow air through and around the heat sink to better cool the chip. While simple in concept, and inexpensive to produce, this is also a common area where failure can cause overheating, and it is easy to rectify. The same dust and debris that can clog our household furnace filters can accumulate and clog the passages in the heat sink, and obstruct the blades of the chip fan. It is good practice to periodically unplug the computer, practice safe electrical safety, and remove the “dust bunnies” from the fan and heat sink with a small vacuum, canned air, or a cotton swab. You may also want to read the label on the chip fan to see if it has a “sleeve” or “ball” bearing. Sleeve bearings tend to have a shorter life before they fail, and can lead to premature chip failure due to overheating. Ball bearing fans are slightly more expensive, but tend to last much longer, providing for more reliable chip cooling.

The power supply also has a fan, which for many computers, is the primary cooling component that

exhausts the hot air from inside the computer. If this fan fails, or becomes obstructed with dust and other debris, the computer will overheat. This fan must also be frequently inspected, and cleaned as necessary, with a small vacuum or canned air. If the fan starts to squeal, or otherwise appears to fail, it is imperative that either the fan or the entire power supply be promptly replaced.

Many computer cases have a space and mounting for an additional fan; if available, the additional fan should be installed. They are readily available, and inexpensive.

Additional supplemental cooling is also available, and can be easily self installed. One of the simplest to install is an exhaust fan that sits in a vacant PCI slot, which almost all desktop computers have. These fans, which typically exhaust air from the computer, can either be powered by the PCI slot or by a power cord connected to a plug inside the case. These are especially effective at cooling video cards, which generate a lot of heat; Intel recommends that the video cards be kept below 105 degrees F. Again, the slightly more expensive ball bearing fans are considered superior to the less expensive sleeve bearing fans. I installed one of these in my computer, and internal temperatures are consistently about 20 degrees F cooler than before.

Other forms of supplemental cooling are available, such as fans that can be mounted in the front of the computer in a vacant drive bay, also common on most computers. These can be simple propeller fans, or powerful turbine fans, and can either push cool outside air into the box, or exhaust hot air from the box. Other fans can be mounted on a

hard drive or CD/DVD drive to cool those hot running devices. Some powerful computers, such as the popular gaming machines, may now utilize a water cooled device, similar to an automobile radiator, complete with antifreeze. Notebook computers, which are often especially subject to overheating may be cooled by mounting them such that air can circulate all around the case (some people sit their notebooks on a cake rack), or on a notebook cooling pad that contains its own fans. One pundit has been recommending those black painted aluminum sheets from a dollar store that are advertised to quickly defrost frozen foods, as they are excellent heat sinks.

Whatever you do, keep your cool—your computer cool, that is.

Ira Wilsker can be reached at [<iwilsker@ih2000.net>](mailto:iwilsker@ih2000.net).

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TECH NEWS

By Sue Crane

Check Clearing

The Check Clearing Act for the 21st Century Act went into effect Oct. 28 and will encourage the banking industry's use of image technology. If you ask for a canceled check for proof of payment, you'll likely receive an IRD (Image Replacement Document) instead.

Recycling

This fall, Californians will start paying \$6 to \$10 more for every monitor, flat panel, laptop, and TV sold in the state—the result of a recycling law that took effect Nov. 1.

Personal Security on Google

Google queries can return Web sites that list personal information including names, addresses, phone numbers, and credit card data of hundreds of card holders. Google would not comment, but they've decided to allow anyone to request the removal of any document that includes a Social Security or credit card number—simply send a note to [<help@google.com>](mailto:help@google.com) with a link to the page. So far this year, Visa has had 20 sites pulled from the Web for trafficking in stolen credit cards.

Strained Silicon Chips

Intel will incorporate changes in its 65-nanometer strained silicon manufacturing process beginning in 2005. Circuits made with this 65-nanometer process can boost performance or cut power consumption or do both. The enhanced version can increase performance by 30 percent. With strained silicon, Intel is at least a generation ahead of competitors IBM and AMD, who have also begun to include strained silicon in chips. In 2009 Intel expects to be making 32-nanometer chips.

Modeling Blue Genes

Mayo Foundation will use IBM's Blue Gene supercomputer for mathematical modeling required to understand gene and protein structures and their interactions to get clues about disease causes. The technology, aimed at improving diagnosis, curing diseases, and developing individualized treatment, may help Mayo understand

which genes might be responsible for certain diseases, including various cancers.

Bio Inkjets

Researchers have developed a way to print sheets of solid animal tissue by filling inkjet cartridges with animal cells, or “bio-ink,” and using basic AutoCAD design software. The scientists are designing and generating tissue that could someday save heart patients who need new cardiac tissue, and allow doctors to study, scan, and duplicate exactly what a patient needs, and develop custom treatments.

Online Machine Shop

There is a free program from eMachineShop.com that may be an inventor’s dream. The program lets people design 3-D objects (such as car parts, door knobs, etc.) in metal or plastic and then order them online. The software checks to determine whether a design can be made, tells the customer how much it will cost, and sends the design to a “real world” machine shop for manufacturing.

Ultra Wideband

Freescale Semiconductor Inc. received certification from the FCC in September for its ultra wideband chip set. UWB (ultra wideband) wireless technology is expected to replace USB as a peripheral connector for PCs and could enable a new generation of wireless devices. The first generation products support 100-110 Mbps, and the road map aims for speeds of 220 Mbps by the end of the year.

Perspective TV

Sony’s new television technology allows viewers to zoom in, pan, and tilt their perspective in television broadcasts. Sony said the new DRC-MFv2 or “Digital Reality Creation

Multifunction” controller chip will help to unlock and take more advantage of the level of detail available in high-definition digital video.

“Cool” Computers

Digital Lifestyles believes it’s got exactly what teenage computer users want. The hip-e computer is white with screen and keyboard framed in fuzzy pink fur. Or a leopard skin. Or a graffiti pattern.

Sue Crane is Vice President / Editor of the Big Bear Computer Club, CA. Reach her at [<sue.crane@charter.net>](mailto:sue.crane@charter.net).

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Digital Photography Translating Photospeak By Bill Moeller

Although digital cameras tend to use similar terms, and to offer similar features at any given price level, they are not all identical. Some of the names of the controls used in this article (italicized terms) might be called by different names on your camera, and some of the features discussed here might not be available on your camera. But all of the concepts apply.

Tried reading your new digital camera’s instruction manual lately? Mine is pretty clear, but it is 124 pages cover-to-cover and seems to assume that I already know what things like exposure compensation, white balance,

aperture, and exposure index are. Do you? If not, you are probably not getting the most out of your manual, or your camera.

Overall, the camera is really a pretty simple device in spite of the incredible technology built into it. It has a lens designed to gather the light and focus the image from the scene to be photographed, a photo sensor to capture the image, an adjustable diaphragm to control the brightness of the image, a shutter to control the length of time the sensor is exposed to the image, and a microprocessor to “develop” the picture right then and there.

Everything follows from these basics. Every bell and whistle on your camera is there to give you control over composition, focus, exposure, and image quality. Not interested in all that control? Use the full automatic mode and forget all the rest. All you have to do is look in the viewfinder, compose the scene, and push the button. If alarms go off, the camera is most likely telling you it can’t handle this one on full automatic. Otherwise, you got a good one.

Want more control? Read on

The simplest way to get just a little more control is to use **Scene Selection** to select the type of picture you are about to take. Choices typically include **Portrait**, **Landscape**, and one or two others. In this mode the camera selects preprogrammed settings for each control that will probably do a pretty good job for that type of picture in most cases.

Experienced photographers ignore these settings, preferring to select the various control setting for themselves. But doing this requires a deeper understanding of how a camera works. With focus, for example, the camera

focuses most sharply on a specific object or area in the scene. At wide lens apertures, everything closer or farther away will be noticeably less sharp. At smaller apertures, this effect will be far less noticeable. If available, **Aperture Priority** mode can be used to control this “depth of field,” while allowing the camera to automatically select the shutter speed necessary for correct exposure.

At slow shutter speeds moving objects will appear blurred; at high speeds they will appear frozen. **Shutter Speed Priority** mode, if available, can be used to control the amount of blurring, depending on the photographer’s wishes, while allowing the camera to automatically select the aperture necessary for correct exposure.

Manual mode, if available, can be used to control both aperture and shutter speed at the same time. The trick is to select a combination that gives the desired effect while still giving proper exposure. If this is not possible, changing the **ISO** setting (discussed below) might do the job.

Proper exposure is critical in producing a good photograph. Regardless of the exposure mode used, proper exposure might not be possible, or you might want to deviate from “proper” for creative reasons. You might even not be sure what proper is and want to hedge your bets. Several controls are available to meet these needs. **ISO** controls the amount of light necessary for proper exposure. The higher the setting, the less light required. But the higher the setting, the “noisier” the picture. (“Noise” is sort of like grain in a high speed film.) A good rule of thumb is to keep the camera set on the lowest available **ISO** setting, changing

it only when there is compelling reason to do so.

EV (exposure value, or **Exposure Compensation**) allows you to force the camera to overexpose or underexpose the scene by a fixed amount relative to what it would otherwise do. For example, the camera will typically underexpose a snow scene because it is trying to make a middle gray out of all that white snow. **EV** can be used to compensate for this by telling it to add some more exposure to the scene.

If you suspect that a little overexposure or underexposure might produce a photo more to your liking, and you're not sure which, use **Exposure Bracketing**. This time honored procedure, widely used by professional photographers, produces three photos in rapid succession—one “properly” exposed, one underexposed by a set amount, and a third overexposed by the same amount.

Closely related to exposure is **White Balance**. We humans have an incredible ability to perceive what we see in “normal color,” even when there is a strong color cast in the scene before us. Your digital camera attempts to do this same thing automatically. When you believe it will not do the job properly you can override the automatic setting by using the **White Balance** control. A good rule of thumb here is to leave this control on automatic unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

Image Size, sometimes called **Resolution**, is used to specify the number of pixels in the recorded image. The more pixels, the finer the image will be. It will appear sharper and more detailed. But, the more pixels, the faster you will fill up your memory card. A good rule of thumb here is always use

the maximum number of pixels available. If you fill up your memory card too fast, buy more memory cards.

Image Quality typically allows you to choose between storing the image in a **tif** or a **jpg** file. There is usually only one **tif** choice, but several **jpg** choices. The difference is that **tif** stores the image with zero loss, while **jpg** compresses the image for storage and loses information in the process. A good rule of thumb here is to use the finest (least lossy) **jpg** setting available. As with **Image Size**, if you fill up your memory card too fast, buy more memory cards.

If you have an **Auto Focus** control, your viewfinder or viewing screen will very likely show what area of the scene the camera is focusing on. Explore the options and see which you like. If you choose an option that focuses on the center of the scene, you will have to fight the tendency to always locate the principal subject dead center in the picture. You can get around this by pointing the camera directly at the subject, depressing the shutter release half way until you achieve **AF Lock** (focus) and **AE Lock** (aperture), recomposing the scene without releasing pressure, and then depressing all the way to take the picture. (Some cameras have additional locking controls so you can lock focus on one part of the scene, and aperture on another.)

Digital Zoom is worthless. Ignore it. All it does is digitally enlarge the image and crop it. You can do this much better on the computer, with a higher quality result.

Photo Effect includes options such as **Sepia** (a brown tone effect) and **Solarize** (which produces an exotic mixed positive/negative effect). These are also much better done on the computer.

Sharpness is another control best left to the computer after the picture is taken. The need for this adjustment (if any), and the proper degree of adjustment, can best be seen with a large image on the computer monitor.

Red Eye Reduction partially or completely eliminates the “red eye” effect when using the flash to photograph people or animals in dim light. Very useful when it works, but you might need to compensate for the startled or stiff reaction to the preflash and the resulting delay in taking the picture.

Burst mode, like exposure bracketing, allows you to hedge your bets. It fires off several shots in rapid succession to increase your chances of taking the picture at just exactly the right time in a fast-moving situation. Very useful for sports action, and for catching that elusive fleeting expression when shooting your favorite subject.

Hologram AF (AF Assist Beam) allows you to use autofocus in very dim light. It does this by projecting a beam of light on your subject for your camera to focus on. It is extremely useful, but limited by how far the camera can throw the light.

If your camera has a **Histogram** display, learn to use it. It shows graphically the complete distribution of light values in a scene, and how they will appear on the picture you are about to take. There is no more powerful tool available on your camera for getting the exposure right, but it is very difficult to learn to use to full advantage. If you are serious about your photography, and want complete control, it is worth the effort.

NightShot and **NightFraming** are uncommon, but useful features.

NightShot uses infrared light projected by the camera to take pictures in total darkness. The colors in the picture are strange because of the light source, and it is probably best to desaturate the image on the computer and view it in black and white. **NightFraming** uses infrared light to focus and compose the image in total darkness, then uses the flash to take the picture. Colors in this case are normal.

Finally, **Macro** mode is used to take extreme closeup shots. It enables you to get closer, and to get higher quality shots while you’re there. But do remember to reset this control when you go back to normal shooting distances.

In photography, as in computing, the jargon is endless. I have tried here to shed some light on some of the more common and useful terms. If I have omitted one that is giving you trouble, send me an e-mail.

This article is reprinted from the NWA-PCUG Newsletter, September, 2004. Bill Moeller is Vice President of the Northwest Arkansas PC User Group, and you can reach him at wmoeller@arkansasusa.com.

Problems With Windows XP Service Pack 2

By Bettie Cummings Cook

Recently we have been reading about the debate over whether or not to install Windows XP Service Pack 2. The update has some bugs that cause problems in some software.

I am a firm believer in keeping software updated. The update is not created to cause you frustration but to

make your software work better. Considering all the hundreds of software programs and hardware drivers, it is amazing updates work as well as they do.

Your software is far more likely to work well if it is kept updated. Most problems are created by structure of the program compilation of non-Microsoft software.

When installing an update, it is important that you must read the update instructions carefully. I'm convinced failure to read and apply the instructions to your computer is the cause of some conflicts.

Microsoft Knowledge Base Article 884130 <<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=884130>> provides a list of programs that are known to experience a loss of functionality when they run on Windows XP Service Pack 2-based computers. If you have downloaded and installed SP2 and are experiencing error messages, this web site is for you.

SP2 includes Microsoft Windows Firewall, which updates the firewall and replaces Internet Connection Firewall (ICF). If firewall is blocking a program, Knowledge Base Article 875357 provides the solution to unblock it. Of particular importance to everyone who has updated to Windows XP SP2 is the caution that Norton's Anti-Virus 2003 may not be automatically scanning. You may not be getting an error message about this, so it is vital to read the data regarding Norton. Some of the popular software items experiencing problems are the AOL toolbar, BlackICE, Norton's Systemworks 2003 GoBack, OmniPage Pro, Word Perfect Office, Yahoo Instant Messenger, and Zone Alarm. See the list for others not named here.

The web page lists the programs and links to their makers' web sites. Go to that site and download a patch to allow the software to work with SP2.

While I'm on the subject of Microsoft, did you know there is a Microsoft Products Public Newsgroup web page <<http://support.Microsoft.com/newsgroups/>>? Each product has a forum where one can post questions and answers. Solutions to MS problems may be found here.

Bettie Cummings Cook is the editor of The P-SEE, newsletter of the Southwest Indiana PC Users Group <<http://swipcug.apcug.org>>. Contact her at <bccook@evansville.net>.

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.

Ergonomic Gizmos

By John R. Chait, D.C.

How do you use your laptop? Are you an occasional user who works on your laptop for short periods of time, or are you a full-time user with the laptop as your main computer? Occasional users will have less ergonomic risk of problems developing than full-time users.

Laptop Posture

Laptops violate basic ergonomic design requirements, so using a laptop is a tradeoff between poor neck/head posture and poor hand/wrist posture.

Occasional Users

Find a chair that is comfortable and that you can sit back in. Position your laptop

in your lap for the most neutral wrist posture that you can achieve. Angle the laptop screen so that you can see it with the least amount of neck deviation.

Full-time Users

Position the laptop on your desk in front of you so that you can see the screen without bending your neck. This may require that you elevate it off the desk surface using a stable support surface, such as a computer monitor pedestal. Use a separate keyboard and mouse. You should be able to connect a keyboard and mouse directly to the back of the laptop or to a docking station.

Use the keyboard on a negative-tilt keyboard tray to ensure a wrist neutral posture. Use the mouse on an adjustable position mouse platform. The design of laptops violates a basic ergonomic requirement for a computer, namely that the keyboard and screen are separated. In the early days of personal computing desktop devices integrated the screen and keyboard into a single unit, and this resulted in widespread complaints of musculoskeletal discomfort. By the late 1970's a number of ergonomics design guidelines were written, and all called for the separation of screen and



Letter From The Editor

Who Says Computers Don't Have A Mind Of Their Own

I have a Compaq Presario 1700 Laptop with a CD/DVD drive, and XP Home operating system. The XP system includes Windows Media Player; OK? But when I slipped in a DVD disc, the Media Player screen came on, but there was a message that I needed to install a Decoder. I Googled for awhile and found an article that said Microsoft didn't provide a Decoder with XP's Media Player. (Why not? I say.) I went to the MS site, and they recommended 4 or 5 vendors with Decoders. I picked Cyberlink and downloaded and installed a Decoder for \$14.95. Now I'm all set, right? No.

Now when I slip in a DVD disc, I get a message that says "Media Player currently cannot play DVDs." That's real progress! I took the computer to a SEMCO meeting and got Bob and Franz to play around with it. After awhile they got it to play a DVD, but they didn't know what they did to make it work. When I got home, same problem: "Media Player currently cannot play DVDs." For two months I play around clicking everything I can find in every order; still no luck. Why couldn't I reproduce what Bob and Franz did?

I take it back to a SEMCO meeting, figuring it's the air in the meeting room, or Bob's magic touch, or the color of the lighting that makes it work there but not at home. Sitting in the back of the room before the meeting, and without Bob, I try it, and it works! What's going on here?

Back home again I stumbled on the answer. Boot up on AC power, and it won't work. Boot up on battery, slip in a disc, and it starts playing automatically.

Further experimentation showed: Boot up on battery, switch to AC power, and it won't work. Boot up on battery, start the DVD playing, then switch to AC power, and it continues to work.

Go figger that!

Bill

keyboard. The reason is simple; if the keyboard is in an optimal position for the user, the screen isn't, and if the screen is optimal, the keyboard isn't. Consequently, laptops are excluded from current ergonomic design requirements because none of the designs satisfy this basic need. This means that you need to pay special attention to how you use your laptop, because it can cause you problems.

Copyright 2003. This article is from the October 2003 issue of the Sarasota PC Monitor, Sarasota PC User Group <http://www.spcug.org/>. Contact John Chait at drchait@hotmail.com.

NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS

Please take notice that under the Bylaws of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc., nominations for officers will be taken at the December general meeting to be held Sunday, December 12, 2004 at 1:30 p.m., with the election of officers to be held at the January general meeting.

The following offices will be open for nominations:

- 1) President
- 2) Vice President
- 3) Secretary
- 4) Treasurer
- 5) Two Members at Large of the Board of Directors



BOARD MEETING

10/10/04

Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present:

President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier, Publications Committee Chairman Bill Agnew, and Members at Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

Old Business:

Treasurer Roger Gay reported that the balance on hand is \$5043.79 with \$120 not deposited. It is time for Claire Baum, Jack Baum and Stephen Cook to renew their memberships. The membership stands at 80.

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

New Business:

Tom Callow announced that he made a computer presentation at the Highland Library to an audience of 15. He indicated that several people appeared interested in joining SEMCO.

Bob Clyne announced that the Telesthetic price has been reduced by one dollar. See the ad in the DATA BUS.

Bob Clyne moved to create two "members at large" positions on the board for next year. Richard Jackson seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Warner Mach moved to adjourn. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach



SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

November 14: SIG-IBM: Identity Theft: David Strange and Robert Tuck, representatives of Prepaid Legal Services, Inc. in Michigan will discuss the problem of identity theft—identity theft from a computer user point of view and how to protect yourself from identity theft.

October Meeting Attendance: 33

Tip

For a wealth of information on digital photography collected from various sources, try the Web site <<http://www.alldigitalphotography.net/>>.

Tip

To disable the Recycle Bin, right click the Bin, click Properties, and check “Do not remove files to the recycle bin.” Deleted files will bypass the Bin.

Tip

In XP, turn off System Restore before you try to clean up a virus. Otherwise it will restore the virus along with everything else. Remember to turn it back on when you finish.

Tip

There are 10 kinds of people: those who understand binary, and those who don’t!



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

November 14: Creating Fancy E-Mails: SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will show how to create fancy e-mails using Outlook Express Stationery Wizard and various Internet scripts.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP

Rotating Volunteer Hosts

November 14: Help And Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience.



December 6:(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.

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

SEMCO Input and Members’ Ads — Deadline: Sun., November 21, 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 \(address Page 2\)](#).

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)

Nov. 27–Saturday, 10am (4th Saturday); W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd., 1 mile west of Orchard Lk Rd. Jack Lockman at thunder@tir.com or 313-341-8855.

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

Dec. 1–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); Rm 201, Clara E. Mackenzie Library-Science Bldg, St. Clair Community College, 323 Erie St., Port Huron. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: Christmas Party.

DCOM Computer Club

Nov. 12–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)

Nov. 11–Thursday, 7pm (2nd Thursday); Kelly Services Bldg, 999 West Big Beaver, corner Crooks & Big Beaver, Troy. <http://www.dpug.org>.

FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)

Dec. 14–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

Nov. 21–Sunday, 3pm–5pm (3rd or 4th Sunday); Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (at Telegraph Rd.). Info: Terry White, terry@macgroup.org or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: Photoshop Elements 3.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

Nov. 20–Saturday, (3rd Saturday); 11:00am main meeting (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <http://www.mactechnics.org>. Cassie at cassiemac@yahoo.com or 313-971-8743.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

Nov. 11–(2nd Thur), MAC SIG; Nov. 11–(2nd Thur), Golden Masters SIG; Nov. 18–(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: The Apple Buffet Q & A Meeting.

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)

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

SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.)

Nov. 11–Thursday, 6:30–9:00pm, (2nd Thursday); Zauel Library, Shattuck & Center Rds., Saginaw. Web: <http://www.svca.org>.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group

Nov. 13–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

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Contact SEMCO member John Lodden or Customer Service <service@telesthetic.com> or 1-800-807-4515.

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OCTOBER REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator

Betty MacKenzie

Roland Maki

Carol Sanzi

Gary DeNise

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—November/December

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

November 14—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: Identity Theft:** David Strange and Robert Tuck, representatives of Prepaid Legal Services, Inc. in Michigan, will discuss the problem of identity theft—identity theft from a computer user point of view, and how to protect yourself from identity theft.

SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 pm, **Room 209, Student Lounge**. Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 pm, **Room 235**. **Program: Creating Fancy E-Mails:** SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will show how to create fancy e-mails using Outlook Express Stationery Wizard and various Internet scripts.

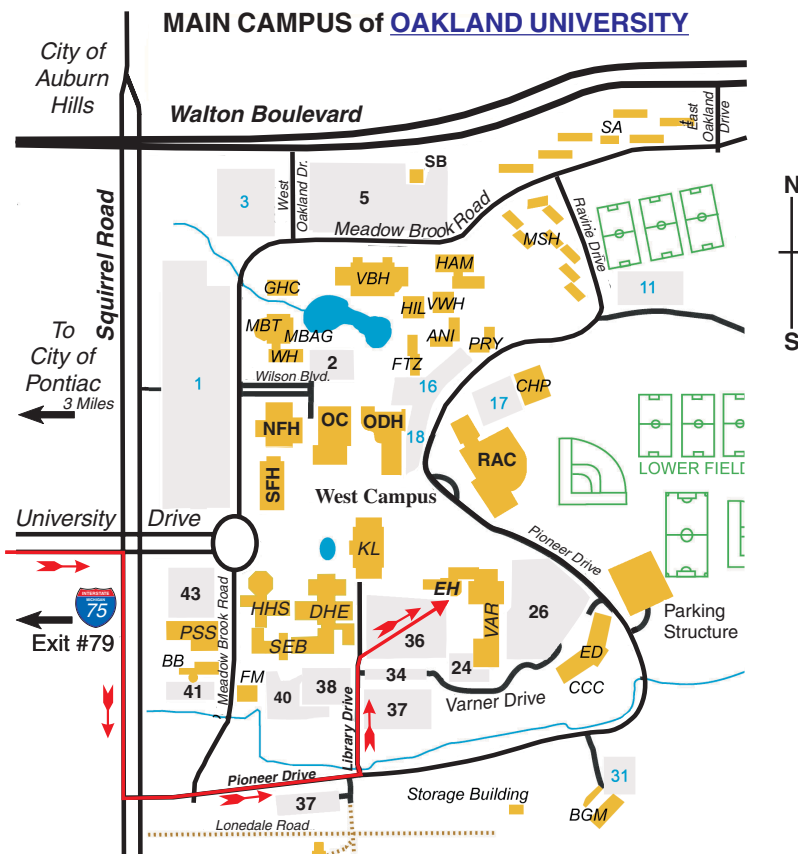
SIG-ADVANCED, **December 6—MONDAY, 6:45 pm**, Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway: take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak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

December 12—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)



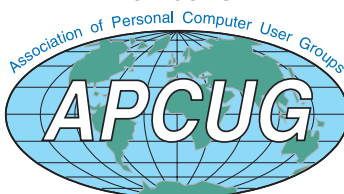
MAP LEGEND

- 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)

November 14

December 12

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