IN THIS ISSUE

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

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

My wife and I worked some great trade shows lately, and they just keep coming. We worked some real estate shows that didn't have spectacular exhibits, but they did have great speakers. Since we worked security for the production crew putting together the great entertainment for attendees, we met all the celebrities when they came in back stage. My wife got a nice greeting from Dr. Phil McGraw and we met Tony Robins (famous motivational speaker), Brooks Robinson (ball player), James Brolin (Marcus Welby, MD and Hotel) and Katie Curic. The most interesting thing in the exhibit hall was two guys sculpting a giant sandcastle, which was impressive. They worked the entire show doing it.

Among others, we worked the PMA (Photo Marketing Assn. show) <http://www.pmai.org>. It was a great show with over 29,000 attendees. All the great names in photography, hardware, cameras and software were there with fantastic booths. Plenty of very large printers were being demonstrated also. Unfortunately, I had personal business

and ended up with little time to browse that show. The Panasonic booth had a wonderful scale model village as a simulated winter snow scene. It had all the usual old time village buildings and vehicles, some small rotating carnival rides, moving ice skaters on a simulated ice rink, moving snow skiers, a working train, and other working models. It was very impressive in about a 12-foot square area. Lights came on in buildings and streetlights when nighttime was simulated. The person setting it up told us he could put one in our living room if we liked, but we told him we didn't have room (money either).

One day I was entering the show floor and Jerry Stephens from Toronto Users Group yelled at me. You probably remember him from the days when he was active in APCUG. We had only a little time to talk, but it was sure nice to see him.

The Nikon booth had eight young people dressed in bright yellow jump suits and riding yellow electric scooters all around outside the building greeting people. They were giving out yellow candies on a card inviting folks to visit the Nikon booth and get in on the daily drawings for fabulous prizes. Another booth was giving away USB flash drives, which is getting more common all the time.

Best of all, we also worked the Home Electronics Expo <http://www.ehxweb.com>, one of my favorites. Talk about a candy store venue; that was it for me. I saw many cabling, switching and speaker booths along with companies for planning your digitally controlled house. There were speakers in all kinds of configurations that could blend into the décor of your house or garden and patio; for example,

some looked like a rock <http://www.stereostone.com>.

In one booth they had a luxury easy chair with a controller that was precoded for over 680 movies (1-888-442-3269). Just pop in your favorite movie on a DVD, and the console recognizes the movie and creates the sensations quite realistically for what you are seeing on screen while in that easy chair. It even simulates a bumpy road, and only six grand for it all. I often sleep through a movie, so that wouldn't work well for me. My proofreader wondered how the chair handled the bullets in a shooting scene, or a steamy sex scene.

I saw door locks controlled by a sensor that could recognize your thumbprint to open the lock, then the same sensor could recognize another fingerprint to open or close your garage door <http://www.ekeyUSA.com>. I may have a deal on them. Another company had technology to track all use of locks in your company and who used them, putting the data on a Web site that could be easily tracked from anywhere by the proper person.

I loved the Panasonic doorbell that had a camera in the button panel. When a presence is sensed, it turns itself on along with a light, if needed, and you could see who was there on a small LCD monitor inside. The entire person was visible, even at close range. That will be out in July, and I want one <http://www.panasonic.com/CSD>. I didn't see them on the Web site, but maybe soon.

There was a booth with weather stations that were elaborate and looked very sturdy. It looked to be more of a commercial unit, and they used a computer monitor for the stats <http://www.weatherhawk.com>. They had an attachment that would verbally tell you what you wanted to know, including "please shut your windows, as rain is imminent." I saw dozens of big screen plasma and LCD monitors and TVs. The one that impressed me most was the NEC 61" plasma screen. It was so sharp and crystal clear that it almost looked three-dimensional.

There was just too much to write about in this article, but you can take a look at the show's Web site to see the exhibitor list. It was not a large show, but certainly a good one with about 9,000 attendees. I had notified several editors who asked me to e-mail them when it was coming again, after I wrote about it last year, but I didn't run into them. The NCSA (National Systems Contractors Assn.) show <http://www.nsca.org> will be here March 10, and I hope to at least explore it. I'm told it's a similar type of show, except mostly for contractors and installers.

A Deal From Gene and Linda Barlow
User Group Relations has another interesting and helpful product for you. These days our computer life is chuck full of ID and passwords, and we are urged to change them frequently. So how do you remember them all? You could write them all down and hide the list under your mouse pad <G>, or you could get smart and use MyPasswordVault by WhiteCanyon Software to store all those IDs and passwords and keep them at your disposal. Linda sent me the product just before deadline, so I haven't tried it yet, but I will soon, because it has some great features. Make life easier with this unique product and use the discount offered to users group members to buy it for just $15.00 (MSRP $25.00). Go to <http://www.usergroupstore.com>

and use the special code UGDEALS to order.

Attention Gamers!
NevoSoft announces a new space shooter/puzzler game below: (edited, so check their Web site)

"SAINT PETERSBURG, Russia. - January 27, 2005: NevoSoft is proud to announce the release of Zzed, the latest version of an electrifying space shooter mixed with lots of action, adventure and puzzle. Zzed will put the player into the spaceship and take on a tough galactic mission with over 60 levels to win. With superb cartoon graphics, exhilarating gameplay, and original music, Zzed will be the ultimate source of enjoyment for kids and parents alike.

"The game comes to life as Zzed, a young and ambitious alien, has been sent on a special mission by his corrupted boss, Mr. Zzapone. There, in the backwoods of the galaxy, Zzed will have to protect the space foundries of his boss from vast space garbage fields. However, the real reason for the mission is Zzapone's fear that Zzed will throw him down from the corporate throne. Zzed leaves home with a heavy heart, as the assignment separates him from his beloved alien sweetheart. To win the ticket back home, Zzed has to remove all space garbage from around the galaxy."

"Zzed is not all about shooting. The game will also challenge your reaction and thinking,' said Alexey Serebrov, CEO of NevoSoft. 'As you go from level to level, the speed of garbage fields increases. Therefore, you will have to act fast and smart.'

"Availability: Zzed runs under Windows 98/Me/2000/XP and costs $19.95 (USD). Registered customers are entitled to the unlocked gameplay, free updates, and lifetime technical support. An evaluation version of the game, limited to the 40-minute gameplay, is available for free at: <http://www.nevosoft.com/zzed/zzed_demo.exe>. For more information visit us at <http://www.nevosoft.com>."

There is a 10% discount for purchasing the game for user group members. Just use the coupon—ZZED-3B51—during ordering process, and you get the game only for $17.95 (instead of $19.95). Or you may simply order the discounted Zzed by clicking on this link: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?&ss_coupon=ZZED-3B51&item=8323-1 >. We didn't see the discount coupon working yet, so you may have to e-mail them, as I had no time to contact them at this point.

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>.

Rumor
About ten years ago it was rumored on the Internet that Microsoft had purchased the Roman Catholic Church for an undisclosed amount of MS stock. The Pope was to become a senior vice president of Microsoft, and Microsoft executives were to be appointed to the College of Cardinals.

Microsoft denied the rumor.

Computer Hardware Transitions
By Timothy Everingham

When we have been changing computer hardware standards frequently, it has usually been one thing at a time. At other times those in authority say that if we are going to change one thing lets get some other changes done too. We are going through much more of the latter right now.

The thing that is more in the forefront of change currently is the move from PCI and AGP motherboard card slots to PCI Express (PCIe). PCI Express also changes the way data is transferred (serial rather than parallel) and has more intelligent data traffic management. This puts you in the position of having to decide whether to migrate to the AGP and PCI cards when upgrading to a new processor and motherboard or buying a new computer, something that is more of a problem if you recently paid a lot of money for a high end AGP graphics card or have a specialized PCI card where there is no equivalent PCIe card available. However, there are motherboards currently available that have both old and new type slots.

On the other hand, you could go to the other extreme by buying a computer with the new NVIDIA SLI system. That is a motherboard with two PCIe graphics slots, where you can run two NVIDIA graphics cards in parallel to get a 3D graphics performance boost similar to what was done to the old 3dfx Voodoo 2. We also started a shift last spring from Sockets 940 and 754 to Socket 939 for AMD 64 bit processors (Socket A remains for 32 Bit AMD processors) and from Socket 478 to 775 for Intel Pentium 4 processors, which also limits your upgrade options. Dual core processors, which have two CPUs on one chip, will be coming out for workstations, servers, and desktops in the second half of this year. Support for dual core processors will come from more of a BIOS change than socket change; however, some motherboards will be able to support dual core processors by upgrading your flash BIOS, but others will not. We also are making the transition from DDR to DDR2 system RAM, and some motherboards only support DDR2.

Now you think you have had enough. I am nowhere near finished. We now have a new power supply standard too. ATX Power Supply 2.01 is in process of replacing ATX Power Supply 1.3. Newer motherboards have different power connectors now. The new connector has 24 pins rather than the old one with 20. There have been adapters for the 1.3 power connectors to fit 2.01 compliant motherboards, but now we are going to move to adapters for 2.01 power supplies to fit into 1.3 compliant motherboards. Some motherboards and power supplies had AUX connectors, but the new standard does away with that. One thing that is nice with the new standard is that having SATA drive power connectors is now mandatory rather than optional. Also power supplies under the new standard are supposed to be more efficient. Nevertheless, be aware that some power supply manufacturers have been exaggerating the capacity of their power supplies.

However, this new power supply standard is just a step in another transition, the move from the ATX

motherboard and case design standards to BTX design standards. I say standards because there are three different BTX motherboard design formats: BTX, MicroBTX, and Pico BTX. BTX replaces the standard ATX motherboards, with MicroBTX going against the Mini-ATX motherboards and PicoBTX going against the ITX motherboards. Part of the reasons for the change is to redesign the airflows in the case to get rid of all the heat generated by the latest processors.

The airflow of BTX designs is from the front of the computer straight through to the back of the computer rather than typical lower front intake with exhaust in the upper back. The CPU has been repositioned toward the front of the computer so it gets the cool air first. That means a redesign of the power supply to a new BTX standard. Also a thermal module has replaced the standard CPU heat sink and fan. It takes a more global approach in covering the highest heat producing components sitting on the motherboard, including the CPU. Intel is the one who is pushing this, because their Pentium 4s have higher clock speeds than an equivalent AMD Athlon 64 chip, which means they produce higher heat. There is so much heat that Intel had to abandon their goal of producing a 4 GHz Pentium 4 chip. As such, AMD is not in such pressure to move to BTX, so BTX motherboards supporting AMD processors will be a few months behind those supporting Intel processors. The first BTX motherboards just recently came out, and should become dominant in 2006.

What does all this mean? By the second half of 2005, if you have a computer that is more than one year old it will probably be better to get an entire new computer than an upgrade. This puts into motion another round of the old computer becoming the backup computer, and the old backup computer becoming a boat anchor, flowerpot, or for the more adventurous, Christmas or Chanukah display control system for the whole house and yard. However, because there are so many changes with these transitions, many people will get a new computer sooner than normal, resulting in some of the retiring old backup computers being new enough to where nonprofit organizations and schools may want them. The probability is that others than just those selling computers and computer components benefit from the chaos caused by this round of the wonder of computer hardware transitions.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, and Japan. He is a member of TUGNET. You can reach him at <teveringham@acm.org> or <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>.

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INDUSTRY MOVES AHEAD

Paint Shop Pro 9 Shines as Digital Camera Prices Plunge
By Ira Wilsker

At the recent APCUG and CES events in Las Vegas, I saw a myriad of new and improved products. Digital photography, both still and video, was a key portion of what was displayed and demonstrated, as digital photography is rapidly replacing traditional film. One speaker mentioned that some studies indicated that digital photography has surpassed film in both the number of users, and the quantity of images, both still and video. There were full-featured digital still cameras on display with a retail price starting at $99 that could compete nicely in picture quality and ease of use with the popular film-type point-and-shoot 35mm cameras. Some of these were from the rapidly growing Concord Camera company <www.concord-camera.com>, which had its 3 megapixel model 3346Z priced at $99, and its high-end 6 megapixel 6340Z all metal camera for $229, with a wide selection of models in between. As the price of digital photography has plunged, and the availability and quality of reasonably priced cameras has increased, there is an increasing demand for software to edit and manage the massive amounts of digital photos that are being taken.

One of my long time favorite photo (and other digital image) editing software products has been JASC's Paint Shop Pro <www.jasc.com>. In October, Corel purchased JASC and introduced its version 9 under the Corel Paint Shop Pro label. Apparently I was not alone in liking Paint Shop Pro, as a recent edition (12/28/04) of PC Magazine awarded Paint Shop Pro 9 its coveted "Best of Year" in the "Image Editing—Serious Hobbyist category."

Paint Shop Pro is a feature-rich product comparable in capability with its more expensive competitors. It is priced within reach of most at $129 retail, and is often discounted or associated with significant rebates. If you take digital photos, you will likely find Paint Shop Pro a vital utility to improve the quality of your photos. Among the features it offers is an "Automatic Photo Fix," which with one mouse click will sharpen, brighten, and enhance your digital photos. A variety of image filters are available that can enhance the contrast, brightness, and color in an image and can bring back detail that may have been lost in shadows or underexposed images. In one demonstration that I witnessed, a digital photo of an old church was shown; it was clear that the sun was behind the church, and the façade was in dark shadow, rendering it a dark mass of shape. One click of a "Fill Flash/Backlighting Filter," integral with Paint Shop Pro 9, and the church front appeared in full detail, with bright color, as if the sun had been shining on the façade, rather than behind it!

Sometimes a defective pixel or spots, possibly due to "digital noise," may appear in a digital image, or the image appears grainy; using the "Digital Camera Noise Removal" utility, the spots disappear, and a sharp image is created.

One of the most impressive features I saw during a presentation on Paint Shop Pro was jokingly called the "ex-" tool, where you can quickly remove images of unwanted people (the "ex" referring to "ex-significant others"),

pets, or other objects from a picture. On one image was a group of people, and as a demonstration, Paint Shop Pro quickly removed a member of the group, and calculated what the image would look like behind the subject! Obviously, this works best when there is a somewhat uniform background. In another example of a photo of kids in a grassy park, a piece of trash blew into the image as the photo was taken, and with a few mouse clicks the trash disappeared, and clean grass seamlessly appeared in its place.

Another very impressive feature was a utility to seamlessly combine images vertically and horizontally into a panoramic image, merging a quantity of images into one larger image, automatically matching the shading, size, and color on each edge, such that the new merged image showed no indications that the imaged was cobbled out of over a dozen individual photos.

For those who like to do creative things with their digital photos, or other graphics images, Paint Shop Pro 9 includes a large selection of "tubes" and borders which can be used to make an image more attractive. Another utility allows the image to appear as a painted picture, with a variety of brush stokes, as it would have appeared if painted on canvas. Shapes of all types can be added, and a comical photographer can add cartoon style "balloons" with text to add some cute emphasis to an image. Of course text can be easily added wherever wanted as well, along with other capabilities for full editing and cropping of the images. Images can also be converted and saved from almost any graphic format to any other format, allowing for universal image compatibility.

Users who would like to try the software before they buy it can download a free trial version from the JASC website. Purchasers who have a competing product, or who have an earlier version of Paint Shop Pro, can download a certificate for a $30 rebate from the JASC website at <www.jasc.com/products/ paintshoppro/files/ psp9comprebate.pdf> .

For those who take their digital photography seriously, Paint Shop Pro 9 would be an excellent choice.

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"Move Me" to a New Computer System
By Gene Barlow

Perhaps you got a new computer recently. By now, you have your new computer all set up and you are busy learning all the new things you can do with it. But, you find that you miss having a familiar program or some files from your old computer on your new computer. How you move your programs and data files from your old computer to your new computer is a question I hear often. Done a step at a

time, this can be a long and hard process. Finding all of your programs and files on your old computer and then installing them and getting them to work on your new computer is not the easiest thing to do. There is a software utility called "Move Me" by Spearit software in New Jersey that can make this process a quick and easy thing to accomplish. Here is a bit of information about this amazing software utility.

First, you place your old computer and your new computer next to each other on a work table or counter. Then you connect the two computers together with one of three different communication cables that will let your two computers talk to each other and move files between them. The fastest of these communication cables is a standard local area network (LAN) connection. If both your old and new computers have ethernet ports on them, you can connect the two with either an inexpensive CAT-5e UTP Crossover cable (under $5 typically) or a couple of standard LAN patch cables connected to a LAN Hub. If you don't have ethernet ports on both computers, but have USB ports on both of them, you can use a special USB1.1 or USB2 File Transfer Cable ($30-40 from <www.spearit.com>) to connect your old and new computer. The third option is to use a special parallel transfer cable ($12) between the two parallel (printer) ports on the two computers. While this is slower than the other two connection options, you can always count on your computers having parallel ports.

When you have your old and new computers connected together with one of the three cable options above, you run Move Me on both computers. Before you begin to transfer your files

between the two computers, Move Me needs to validate your serial number with Spearit software. You will need an internet connection on one of your two computers or even a third nearby computer to do this. The Move Me screen on your old computer will tell you where to connect and what information to submit in your Validation internet run. Move Me is licensed for moving files from a single computer and cannot be used to move files from another computer later on. The validation takes only a minute or two to complete, and then you are ready to start moving all of your files from your old computer to your new computer.

Here's what happens as the move progresses. Move Me gets a file from your old computer and looks to see if it is already on your new computer. If not, it copies the file across the cable and installs it on your new computer. Then it goes back and gets the next file on your old computer. It continues this process until all files have been copied from your old computer to your new computer. The entire process may take an hour or more to complete, depending on the number of files on your old computer needing to be copied and the transfer cable speed.

Move Me copies all of your data and setting files between the two computers. It also copies all of your application programs between the two computers. It even copies the registry entries from your old computer and merges these into the registry of your new computer so that your application programs can run on your new computer. The only things that are not copied to the new computer are your operating system and any files that were already installed on the new computer.

Your old computer is not changed in the Move Me process. So, it will continue to run exactly as it did before the move. Your new computer should now have all of your applications and data files from your old computer sitting on it, as well as anything that was on it before the move began. At this point, you should test all of your programs to make sure they run on your new computer. Some older DOS and Windows applications may not run on Windows XP whether they were transferred with Move Me or installed directly on the new computer. You will need to get a new version of these older applications from the software developer. Other low level utilities, like PartitionMagic, will need to be reinstalled on your new computer in order to get the WinXP version of the program on your new computer. You will find that most of your application programs will work just fine on WinXP.

Move Me is an amazing utility that can save you hours of work migrating all of your files from one computer to another. If you have an older computer that you want to retire as soon as you can get all of your files off it, Move Me is exactly what you need to use. Move Me on a CD lists for $50, but you can purchase the same product at the user group discount price of just $30. Look for it in our User Group Store at <www.usergroupstore.com> and click on any of the yellow "Buy Now" buttons to get to our secure web order form. Complete the form including the special user group code of UGNL0105 and submit it. You may share this discount offer with your immediate family and close friends. These prices are not available to others not involved with a user group.

Windows Movie Maker And Media Player
By Chuck Guion

Windows Movie Maker 2.1
I thought I would create some movies using Windows Movie Maker 2.1 (WMM2.1). One very helpful tip I got at our User Group was to first create the movie in PowerPoint and save each slide as a JPG. You can add text, templates, etc. while you are in PowerPoint. (You don't have to use PowerPoint; you can use Video Effects, Video Transitions, and add text within the program.)

If you haven't downloaded XP's Service Pack 2, then you should download and install it, since WMM Version 2.1 is included. Open up WMM 2.1 and make a Collection (import all of your slides from PowerPoint into the Collection). Start a New Project and drag the slides into Storybook View. Import a music file (MP3) from Windows Media Player (you can download Version 10 from <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows media>) and drag it to the far left in Timeline View. You can also use a microphone to narrate your movie. But you cannot narrate and play music at the same time.

You can play the Storybook and Timeline and shorten your music by moving the corner arrow to the left and cutting it off. You can add Transitions and Video Effects in the Timeline View (in WMM 2.1). You can also lengthen

the time your slide stays on the screen. If you want to take a break, you can give your project a name and save it.

When you are satisfied with your movie, you can save it as a WMV file in My Videos or put it on a CD. The music files are large, so you may want to save them on a CD.

You can bring video clips into WMM 2.1 and add them to your movie. You can also take slides from Digital Video Recorders and bring them into WMM 2.1, but you may have to buy a special video card to get your Analog and Digital recorders to work with WMM 2.1.

Windows Movie Maker has the usual help files, but you might want to go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/default.mspx> for more help on using WMM 2.1.

I have made several movies for my User Group and have also made some on architecture, boats, and birds. WMM 2.1 is a good way to make a family movie. Gather old pictures, cards, poems, etc., scan them, and bring them into WMM 2.1. You can also record your children and grandchildren's voices and put them in the movie. The possibilities are endless. Why don't you try making a movie? It's a lot of fun!

Windows Media Player 10

Microsoft has a new Windows Media Player 10 (WMP10) available now. Go to <www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia> to download it. It was designed for Windows XP. It does not have any help files, but there is an article, "Using Windows Media Player 10" on the web, and you can download it at: <www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/mp10/usingplayer.aspx>.

You can use WMP 10 to listen to music on CDs, MP3s, MIDI, Wave, etc. You can play CD's and DVD's (if you have a DVD drive on your computer). You can also use it to watch your home movies, film clips, etc. You can also use the Internet to find more information about a CD or DVD; i.e., the Album and the Artist. You can quickly Rip from a CD to your computer as well as use different Formats for doing this.

You can also burn your own CD's. Most of the music CD's that you buy have only one or two songs you really like. With WMP10 you can pick and choose your favorite songs from several CD's and put them on one Master CD. Isn't that great, and it's free!

You can also organize your digital media collection. The program will even tell you where you can buy your favorite albums! All in all, I think it is a great program, and it is free! About the only disadvantage is not having any help file.

Chuck Guion is Editor of the Rockport Computer Users' Group, Inc. You can reach him at <http://www.rcug.net>.

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Hackers are NOT Crackers
By Berry F. Phillips

The media loves to publish stories about so-called hackers breaking into computer systems and causing destruction. It is time to set the record straight, based on historical truth.

The hacker culture actually started in the 1950s when computers were huge to say the least, and programming them meant connecting wires to electrodes. While they did not call themselves hackers then, that for the most part explains what a hacker is. A hacker may be defined as a person who enjoys exploring the details of programming systems and how to stretch their capabilities, as opposed to most computer users who prefer to learn only the minimum necessary.

Hacker as a term was first adopted as a badge in the 1960s by the hacker culture surrounding the Tech Model Railroad Club (TMRC) and the MIT AI Lab. All computer systems that we use today are based on early hacker research. Much of this research was done out of love for the subject and the fame within the hacker community. One must be recognized as a hacker by the hacker community, which is a certain ego satisfaction. Several famous hackers from the first computer club, the Home Brew Club, were instrumental in founding major computer companies.

Around 1980, a new breed of computer-fed kids evolved, due to easy access to the Internet in the United States and Europe. They soon learned that they could break into other people's systems. Unfortunately, the media called them hackers, and the name sort of stuck, when in fact hackers do not consider such illegal security breakers to be hackers, but crackers. Hackers build things; crackers break them!

Much of the freeware on the Internet comes from hackers. It would seem that hackers have been given unjustly a bad name by the media and deserve an apology at the least, while crackers should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law for their illegal actions.

While it is true that many hackers possess the skills for cracking, they outgrew any desire to do so except for immediate, benign, practical reasons. Contrary to non-hacker belief, there is no thin line between being a hacker and being a cracker.

Hackers built the Internet, maintain Usenet, and work in IT computer security; and all Internet related businesses owe their origin to hackers. We can demonstrate our respect for their considerable IT achievements by making sure we do not use the term, hacker, when we mean cracker, who is involved in illegal cybercrime.

My thanks to Philip Tellis who did considerable research that was the basis for this article to correctly inform the public.

Berry F. Phillips is a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. You can reach him at <http://www.ccokc.org>.

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Tip: Backup, Backup, Update, Update!

Tech News
By Sue Crane

Free Tax Service

IRS partners Intuit, TaxAct and eSmartTax are offering no-cost services to everyone this year. Two additional companies, FreeTaxUSA.com and FileYourTaxes.com, are extending free services to residents of certain U.S. states. The 10 remaining participating companies, including tax giant H&R Block, have no-cost programs for specific demographics, such as people over the age of 60 or members of the military.

Internet Sales Tax

Forty states and the District of Columbia are working on a national Internet sales tax system. SSTP (Streamlined Sales Tax Project) has issued two requests for bids for software and Web-based networks to track online purchases sales tax payments. As currently envisioned by the states, Web merchants would pay nothing for the services; instead, the vendors would take a cut from tax revenues

Recycling Old Computers

EBay and Intel have developed a "Rethink Initiative," which seeks to bring together public and private organizations to promote recycling and reuse of old PCs and consumer electronics products. The announcement comes days after the Electronic Waste Recycling Act of 2003 became active in California, requiring consumers to pay an Electronic Waste Recycling Fee for certain devices, including monitors and laptop computers. EBay president and chief executive officer Meg Whitman said: "I would love to try as an industry to come together with market-based solutions so we won't have to face federal and state regulation."

Internet Phone Service

Vonage, the No. 1 Internet phone company, is offering its subscribers a wireless Wi-Fi phone that can make calls over the Internet at homes or at public Wi-Fi hot spots. The new phone will let consumers make VoIP calls from any Wi-Fi hot spot. Wi-Fi calls are essentially free, in contrast to cell phone calls, and customers will plug a regular phone into an adapter linked to a broadband Internet line. Vonage will then turn the calls into data that travel by Internet before being converted back to voice at the other end. Meanwhile,Comcast Corp., the nation's biggest cable company, said Monday it plans to roll out phone service over the Internet to all 21.5 million of its customers within the next year and a half, bringing the online technology into the mainstream.

Virtual Nurse

New technology known as eICU ("Enhanced Intensive Care") lets physicians miles away from their patients manage health care via cameras and banks of computer screens. The technology is already in use in at least 18 hospital systems nationwide. Whereas traditional health care systems rely on nurses to notice a problem with a patient and relay the information to a doctor, eICU informs the doctor directly. The doctor can check the patient's ventilator, intravenous medication and anything else in the patient's room, and one physician notes: "The camera is such that I can count eyelashes."

Nanotube Flat Panel Display

If you've bought a plasma TV, you might get one-upped in two years, when TVs using new carbon technology

arrive. A new type of flat-panel display that will rely on diamonds or carbon nanotubes—two forms of pure carbon—to produce images. Theoretically, these "field effect displays," or FEDs, will consume less energy than plasma or liquid crystal display (LCD) TVs, deliver a better picture, and even cost less.

Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspot

RaySat has developed a satellite antenna that turns a moving vehicle into a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot. In addition to the Internet access service, RaySat has developed an antenna that enables cars to receive satellite TV broadcasts—an application that may have broader appeal among consumers. RaySat expects to launch its new product in the third quarter of this year.

Talk to Text

For people fed up with pecking out text messages on their mobile phone, Samsung Electronics may have an answer. The South Korean electronics maker has developed what it is calling the world's first mobile phones that can convert spoken words into text messages. The handsets will be released in the U.S. sometime during the first quarter.

New Kind of Phone Card

In Asia, cell phone handset makers are already marketing phones with embedded memory devices (a chip or magnetic strip) that can be swiped against credit or debit card readers in much the same way consumers now use plastic, and trials are underway to bring the technology to the U.S. Details are still being worked on important issues such as security. "The phones are exciting, but it's going to be a long time" before a widespread base of U.S. merchants and consumers are equipped to use them, says Visa International VP Sue Gordon-Lathrop.

Robotic Soldiers

The U.S. Army is sending 18 remote-controlled robotic soldiers called SWORDS (Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection Systems) to Iraq, but they are not the autonomous killer robots of science fiction. A SWORDS robot shoots only when its human operator presses a button (after identifying a target on video shown by the robot's cameras).

Identity Theft

Most identity theft occurs offline. Despite growing concerns over online fraud, a new study conducted by the Better Business Bureau and Javelin Research finds that most cases of identity theft can be traced to a lost or stolen wallet or checkbook, rather than vulnerable online financial data. Computer crimes make up just 12% of all ID fraud cases in which the origin is known, and half of those are attributed to spyware that sneaks onto computers and steals private information.

Sue Crane is VP / Editor of Bearly Bytes at the Big Bear Computer Club in Big Bear Lake, California. You can reach her at <sue.crane@charter.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.

Save Money with Online Coupons
By Ira Wilsker

Many of us are penny pinching these days. There are synergistic ways that we and our local businesses can mutually benefit, and that is by shopping using the coupons that our local stores and restaurants have placed online. Major manufacturers have now found that online coupons can also be a valuable tool to increase sales, along with the ubiquitous Sunday paper coupon inserts.

There are probably hundreds of online sites that list coupons, and many of them offer coupons for local businesses, as well as e-commerce coupons. One site that is heavy in both local store coupons, as well as "cents off" manufacturers' coupons is wow-coupons.com. Wow-coupons offers deals from retail stores, grocery stores, and restaurants. Some of the local retail stores listed (as of this writing) are: Barnes & Noble (10-15% off w/coupon); Bath & Body (free body lotion with $20 purchase); Circuit City (coupons for video games and digital cameras); CVS (free digital prints and $5 off a disposable digital camera); Foley's (10 – 20% off); Goodyear ($7 off oil change, lube, and filter); Hobby Lobby (1/3 off painting canvas); Lane Bryant ($25 or $50 off qualifying purchases); LensCrafters ($75 off); PayLess Shoes ($2 off $10 purchase); Pier One ($10-$20 off qualifying purchases); Radio Shack (various coupons); over a dozen Sears coupons listed; Target (various coupons); and dozens of other money saving coupons.

Because of my busy schedule, I have to eat out often. One way to control the cost of those restaurant meals is to use the coupons that the restaurants make available online. The big national chains and franchises, as well as many of the strictly local restaurants, now have online coupons. Some of the chain and franchise coupon offerings at wow-coupons.com (as of this writing) are: A&W (sandwich deals); Blimpie (free cookie); El Chico; Little Caesars (Crazy Bread coupon); Pizza Hut (various coupons); Quiznos ($1-$2 off, free chips and soda, free kids meal, all with qualifying purchases); Schlotzsky's (various coupons); Subway (various coupons—there are some location restrictions); Wienerschnitzel (various coupons); and many others.

Independent local restaurants are featured on still another site, <www.restaurant.com>. By entering a city or zip code, localized coupons can be produced. Most of these are not truly coupons, but more in the form of gift certificates, for which a fee must be paid. Typically the fees range from $3 for a $10 certificate, to $10 for a $25 certificate. Additional discounts of 40%-50% are often available by the use of a code, which is often published on a variety of websites, and some discounts (usually 25%) are sometimes available to first time users. I have purchased some of these certificates for our local restaurants, using the 40% off promotions; getting $25 of food for $6 is a bargain in my book!

One proviso that must be noted here: there are often "strings" attached to many of the coupons, such as minimum purchase requirements, frequency of use, restrictions on using the coupon for alcoholic beverages, and other restrictions, so be sure to read any coupon rules before completing the

purchase. I have also had problems at one local restaurant where the cashier had never seen the coupon before, and hesitated to take it, despite the toll-free phone number printed on the certificate for verification; eventually she accepted it. I suggest that the certificate user check with the cashier before using any of these certificates, to be sure that they are accepted. After typing my home zip code in the restaurant.com search box, 20 local restaurants offering the certificates were listed. As I type this, wow-coupons.com has published a discount code, 68429, good at restaurant.com for 50% off ($1.50 for $10, or $5 for $25). These certificates are not just available locally, but are available nationally, and can be money savers when traveling. I checked restaurant.com before a recent trip to Dallas, and found certificates for dozens of restaurants within a few miles of my hotel, using the zip code search feature.

Supermarket shoppers are not neglected when using online coupons. Many of the major manufacturers, such as Proctor & Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, Kraft, and others publish coupons on their Web sites that the shopper is to print and use. Most of the grocery coupon list compiled by wow-coupons.com is for $1 off or more, while some are as low as 50 cents. But as any savvy shopper knows, the wise use of grocery coupons can result in substantial

Roger Gay
1933-2005

Roger Gay, SEMCO Treasurer for 18 years, passed away on March 18, 2005. Roger put up a valiant fight against a series of medical problems for the last several years before succumbing, and his persistence, courage, good humor, and clear thinking through it all was an inspiration to all who knew him.

In addition to his SEMCO activities, Roger was an active volunteer for Cranbrook and the Detroit Zoo. He seemed to always be available when a project needed doing, and when he took on a project, you could be certain that it would be done properly and he would follow it through to a successful completion. He had a gift for clear logical thinking and meticulous attention to detail while still keeping a firm grasp of the overall situation.

Roger led a full life and had a plethora of fascinating stories about his many exploits. If his biography were written, it would make much more interesting reading than many that have been published.

Most of all, Roger was a dear friend, and his passing leaves a great void in the lives of many of us who knew him. We will miss him.

Bob Clyne

savings at the checkout. Some of the coupons I personally printed out for use are 50 cents for Bigelow Tea, $1 off Colgate toothpaste, $1 off Cascade dishwashing tablets, $1 off Ziploc bags, $1 off any Scott tissue product, and many others.

Careful shopping along with the use of coupons and certificates from the Internet can be an important tool in lowering our cost of living and improving the quality of our lives. Use them wisely; I do.

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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BOARD MEETING
3/13/05
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present

Vice President Richard Jackson (who chaired the meeting in the absence of the president), Treasurer Chester Blechinger, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, 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 12:10 p.m.

Old Business

Treasurer Chester Blechinger stated that the balance on hand is $6340.80 with $20.28 not deposited. The membership stands at 85. Tom Callow moved to reimburse Warner Mach $9.20 for refreshments. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried.

In order for Chester Blechinger to perform the duties of treasurer, the authorizing signatures on the bank account must be changed. Carol Sanzi will obtain the forms from the bank for signing next month.

New Business

Tom Callow received five complimentary Microsoft "Award for Customer Excellence" cards to be given to selected members. Tom Callow, Bob Clyne, Jack Vander-Schrier, Richard Jackson, and Warner Mach were awarded the cards.

Tom Callow moved to authorize on a continuing basis the payment of the phone bill and the printing and postage cost of the DATA BUS. Chester Blechinger seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Tom Callow moved to authorize on a continuing basis the payment of SEMCO's post office box. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Chester Blechinger $4.22 for the purchase of a ream of paper. Franz Breidenich 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 12:36 p.m.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

April 10: Marathon Q&A: SIG Co-Chairman Tom Callow will lead the group in a marathon question and answer session. Bring all your questions, and see if you can stump our roomful of experts.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Jack Vander-Schrier

April 10: More Q & A: SIG IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will respond to questions about your computer and the Internet.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

April 10: Help And Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience.

April 10: General Meeting

An extended General Meeting, starting at 1:30 p.m., will include a tribute to Roger Gay, SEMCO's long-time Treasurer, including a poster display depicting his life of accomplishments.

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

May 2: (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.**

March Meeting Attendance: 30

May 2005 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., April 17, 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).

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

CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)
Apr. 23–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)
May 4–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: Remote Assistance.

DCOM Computer Club
Apr. 8–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)
Apr. 14–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)
Apr. 12–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
Apr. 17–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: Something New.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
Apr. 16–Saturday (3rd Saturday); 11:00 am 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
Apr. 14–(2nd Thur) 7:30pm, General meeting; Frat. Order of Eagles Hall in Clawson, 174 Bowers St. (one block North of 14-Mile and one block East of Main). Avi Drissman 248-232-7865. Web: <http://www.themichiganapple.com>. Topic: Demo of AppleWorks 6.

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

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)
May 3–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.)
Apr. 14–Thursday, 6:30–9:00pm, (2nd Thursday); Zauel Library, Shattuck & Center Rds., Saginaw. Web: <http://www.svca.org>.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group
Apr. 9–Saturday, 10:00am–Noon (2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Info: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny MeLampy 248-477-0190.

**MARCH
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Carol Sanzi
Betty MacKenzie
Roland Maki
Anonymous

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of members willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware
or software questions.
Are you willing to help members learn?
Which software programs are you familiar enough with?
It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing
to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

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

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

**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR—April/May

ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

April 10–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO <u>General</u> Meeting at 1:30 pm, **Room 235.**
A Tribute To The Life Of Roger Gay

<u>S</u>pecial <u>I</u>nterest <u>G</u>roups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 2:00 pm, **Room 235. Program: Marathon Questions & Answers**: SIG Co-Chairman Tom Callow will lead the group in a marathon question and answer session. Bring all your questions, and see if you can stump our roomful of experts.

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

NOVICE-IBM GROUP 3:45 pm, **Room 214. Program: Help From An Expert With Discussion Directed By The Audience.**

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE 3:45 pm, **Room 235. Program: More Questions & Answers:** SIG IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will respond to questions about your computer and the Internet.

SIG-ADVANCED , **May 2–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.**
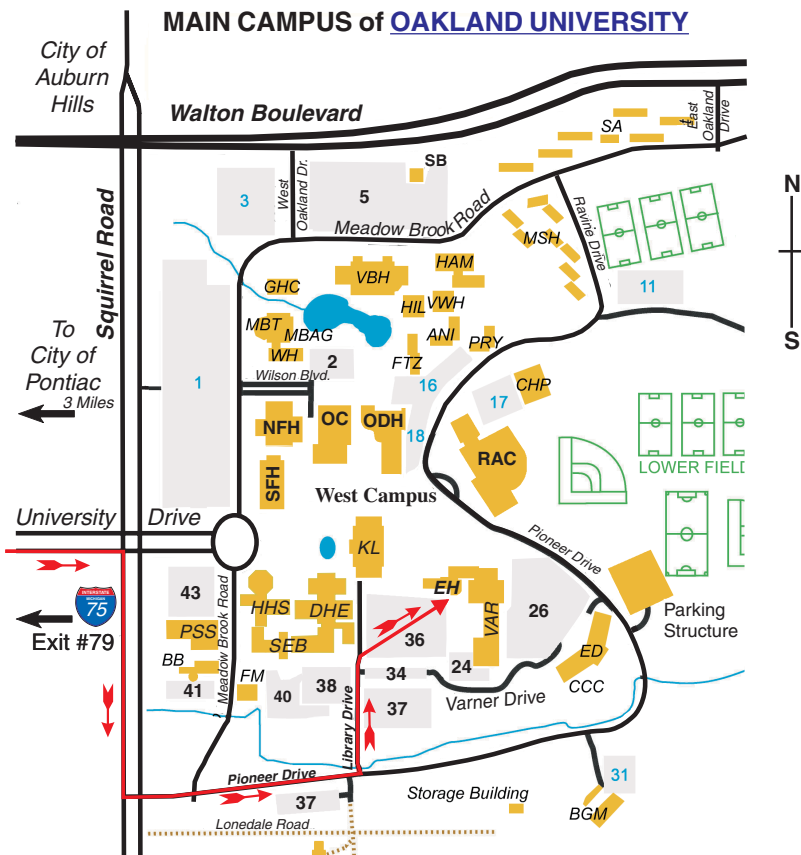
MAY 8–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday). <u>SEMCO</u>, 1:30 pm. **Topics: To Be Announced.**

http://www.semco.org

PUBLIC INVITED

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

MAIN CAMPUS of OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

City of Auburn Hills

Walton Boulevard

Squirrel Road

To City of Pontiac
3 Miles

University Drive

Exit #79

West Oakland Dr.

Meadow Brook Road

Ravine Drive

West Campus

Pioneer Drive

Meadow Brook Road

Library Drive

Varner Drive

Pioneer Drive

Lonedale Road

Storage Building

Parking Structure

LOWER FIELD

N — S

SA — East Oakland Drive

SB — 5 — 3

MSH — 11

HAM — VBH — GHC

HIL — VWH — MBT — MBAG — ANI — PRY — WH — 2 — FTZ — 16 — CHP — 17

Wilson Blvd.

NFH — OC — ODH — 18 — RAC

SFH

KL — EH — VAR — 26 — ED — CCC

43 — HHS — DHE — 36 — PSS — SEB — 34 — 24

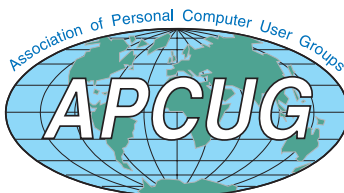BB — FM — 41 — 40 — 38 — 37

37 — 31 — BGM

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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

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

APCUG

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
April 10
May 8

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