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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

It has come to my attention that a nasty popup has been emanating from my Web site intermittently. I would never put a popup there myself; yet there it is. I finally became suspicious after getting it twice when accessing my Web site just to check my browser connection, and that was the only place I had been. A friend checked it closer and finally discovered it in the html code he found, but didn't think it was in my Web site files. The popup has a script containing <www.registrarads.com> and a reference to NamesDirect.com. I sincerly apologize for this, although it was without my knowledge or permission.

Since I use the free space on Earthlink and some additional donated space from a friend for my Web site, I have been using a URL redirect through NamesDirect.com for some time. Originally the redirect was through Yournamefree.com, with whom I never had a problem, but I discovered Yournamefree.com is now part of MyDomain.com, which is also affiliated with NamesDirect.com. Network Solutions is the registrar, and I see no need to change that, because I can reach them anytime day or night with a free call, and they are not the offenders. In the past I became very dissatisfied with MyDomain.com for my other domain names, and after much difficulty making the transfer, thought I was rid of them. A call to NamesDirect.com acknowledged the problem and that I would have to make them the registrar, or take their Web hosting to avoid the problem. I told them I don't reward bad business practices by giving them more business. They didn't care that I was going to write about this in my column, so profit from my bad experience with NamesDirect.com and MyDomain.com.

The popup offers to reset your computer clock, but clicking on it gets programs downloaded to your computer (don't know what). I hope no readers were stung by that obnoxious popup. Most user group members are too smart to fall for that one, but it is deceptive. The whois showed that my technical contact for dealsguy.com had been changed to NamesDirect.com, and I have changed it back to myself twice, but could not make the change stick until I changed the password. A while back it had been changed to some guy in Australia, and I changed it back to me when a friend called that problem to my attention. What a mess, but I hope I found a way to resolve it.

Reminder

The deal for the biometric fingerprint device to operate your locks that I featured last month is still good for August. Think about just laying your finger on a pad that will quickly unlock doors or open your garage door. Ain't technology great! For information see <http://www.ekeyusa.com>, and to

order, you can send an e-mail to <Hassan.Hares@ekeyUSA.com> or call (941) 782-1227. To get the 30% discount, use the password "dealsguy05."

The other announcement deals I featured last month are also still good for August. I had a great product ready for this month, but they could not put a deal together in time, so look for home building and remodeling software next month. I may also finally have a deal on the Dazzle 990, a great product. I'm having fun looking at the products. In their place, I'll include more announcements with a discount or free for user group members.

Free Database
At this writing, InterSystems was still offering Cache, a post-relational database that uniquely combines advanced objects and high performance SQL, as a free download. They say that with Cache, no mapping is required between object and relational views of data, thus contributing savings in both development and processing time. Cache also incorporates a powerful Web application development environment that dramatically reduces the time to build and modify applications. To get your free download, the URL is <http://www.intersystems.com/free>, and I hope it's still free. My description is from their ad and it appears that you do have to register for the download.

How About a Free Toolbar!
(Edited) (Received back in November) (read the privacy statement carefully before using the software)

"The ToolbarBrowser is a new project supported by Trellian and is now available for download at <http://www.toolbarbrowser.com>. The ToolbarBrowser is a Toolbar management tool and a complete Toolbar authoring system.

"Imagine if you could take just the features you want from the many toolbars you may have installed, and combine them into a single super toolbar.

"Imagine if you could manage dozens of separate toolbars in a single tab control.

"Imagine if you could write your own toolbars as easily as you write HTML pages, and share these with your friends, clients, and Web site visitors.

"Imagine if you could add new toolbars at a click of a button without having to install new software, and uninstall them just as easily.

"Imagine if you could write your own toolbars in XML, HTML, Java, JavaScript, or even Flash.

"We very much look forward to receiving your feedback, suggestions and comments and invite you to participate in the ToolbarBrowser developer forum at <http://www.toolbarbrowser.com/forum>.

"Adding Toolbars — Once you have installed the ToolbarBrowser, visit our Toolbar Library to add new toolbars at a click of a button. <http://www.toolbarbrowser.com/toolbar.htm>.

"Standard Features — In addition to being fully programmable and customizable, there are many standard toolbar features that include: Popup Blocking, Keyword Highlighting, Form AutoFill, and more...

"Advanced Authoring — If you are a webmaster, one of the most powerful features is the ability to generate individual toolbars, customized to each visitor's needs or preferences. For example, if you have a financial Web

site, you could display real time stock quotes that are individually tailored to each user. There is virtually no limit to what you will be able to do.

"The cost? The ToolbarBrowser is freeware. Get it from Trillian Ltd. at<http://www.trellian.com>."

Pocket PC Safety!

Edited Announcement from INFOTECS

"ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC: A bulletproof data security system for desktop computers is now available for your PDA. INFOTECS announces version 1.0 of ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC. This application is designed for PDA owners who can now protect their personal information from prying eyes by encrypting and password-protecting their sensitive files. ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC provides your PDA with a totally protected environment where data is stored, encrypted, and protected by a password, even when your device is switched off or in the "stand-by" mode. It allows you to create the so-called "containers." These are secure folders for confidential files, which are created in the memory on a PDA and mounted by ViPNet Safe Disk software. You can easily open and edit any file from a secure folder in a word processor or database program, the file being automatically decrypted when opened and encrypted when saved. The program supports two 256-encryption algorithms, AES and GOST.

"In case of emergency you can use the "panic" mode to demount all mounted "containers" and hide the main window of the program from view with one tap. Added to this is the ability to connect your PDA to a PC and exchange data, provided that ViPNet Safe Disk is installed on the desktop computer.

"Pricing and Availability: ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC runs under Windows Mobile 2003 and costs $26.40 (USD) for a single-user license. A 20% discount is available to the buyers of ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC and ViPNet Safe Disk for Windows. Registered customers are entitled to free updates and lifetime technical support. A 20-day fully functional demo version of the program is available as a free download at the company's Web site <http://www.infotecs.biz>.

"Product page link: <http://www.infotecs.biz/Soft/safe_diskppc.htm>.

"Direct download link: <http://www.infotecs.biz/demo/download_safedisk_ppc.htm>

"E-mail: <novikov@infotecs.biz>."

IconoMaker: A Neat Little Gift From Icon Empire

Announcement Received (Edited)

"May 31, 2005: Icon Empire introduces IconoMaker.

"Icon Empire, a producer of award-winning graphics editing software, offers a nifty little freeware package for editing icons with a variety of custom attributes and creative styles. IconoMaker creates and edits icons of any size, colored by virtual pen, brush, airbrush, ellipse, straight line, or curve tools, compatible with Windows™ XP 32-bit color depth with 8-bit alpha channel. Users can roll, shift, and rotate images, sort images within icons, and copy and paste images to other applications. This program supports ICO and ICPR formats, and now supports PNG images. Happily for Linux users, IconoMaker now imports and exports XPM and XBM images. For a rundown of IconoMaker's features, visit <http://www.free-icon-editor.com/>.

"Icon Empire is giving it away. A Microsoft Windows™ 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003 operating system is required.

"Contact information: Victor Ivlichev <feedback@iconempire.com>.

"Direct evaluation download URL: <http://www.iconempire.com/downloads/iconomaker.exe>.

"Screenshot URL: <http://www.iconempire.com/free-icon-editor/scrf.png>."

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>.

Freecycle Network Offers Never-Ending Garage Sale (And It's All Free!)
By Gabe Goldberg

"It's not easy being green," sang Kermit the green Muppet frog. But it's getting easier, as people, corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies recognize the benefits of conserving and recycling resources of all sorts.

There have always been opportunities, such as garage sales, flea markets, and thrift shops, for casual/local exchanges of goods. Most of us have likely both bought and sold, giving new life to things we've enjoyed but no longer need, cashing in gifts we can't quite imagine using, and finding economical goods courtesy of neighbors and charitable organizations.

Before we recently moved, my wife and I took the opportunity to get rid of anything we thought was surplus. Fortunately, we beat the year-end crush at places like Salvation Army. But in December I did see 18-wheelers being loaded with goods from people who suddenly remembered the tax deduction for making such donations to charitable organizations. And I wondered how much of the tonnage being hauled would actually be sold and reused.

As in many other areas, the Internet lends new sparkle and efficiency to an old idea: having things used until they're completely worn out. It's really true that one person's junk can be another person's treasure. In fact, the worldwide Freecycle Network <www.freecycle.org> offers goods at the Internet's favorite price (at least for buyers): free! Perhaps best of all, the Network offers in-person one-to-one transfers making it likely that goodies will go where they're cherished.

The Web site notes: The worldwide Freecycle Network is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It's a grassroots movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is run by a local volunteer moderator (good people). Membership is free.

The Freecycle Network was started in May 2003 to promote waste reduction in Tucson's downtown and help save desert landscape from being taken over by landfills. The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items.

Freecycling is interesting because, while it could only be done on the Internet, it has a very local focus. That is, while Web sites and discussion mailing lists draw worldwide clientele, physical transfer of free goods is constrained to relatively small areas.

So Freecycle operates as locally oriented mailing lists. For example, in the Washington, DC region, there's a huge list for the central city (one of the top ten lists with more than 6,000 people), and many suburbs have their own lists with dozens or hundreds of subscribers.

The main Freecycle Web site lists rules and etiquette, which are echoed by welcome messages to new subscribers. It's all simple and reasonable: Goods offered must be available for pickup in the local area; stick to recycling; avoid politics, spam, and off-topic messages; begin all e-mail subject lines with one of the words: Offer/Taken/Wanted/ Received.

Rules such as "Keep it free, keep it legal, keep it safe for all ages" prohibit offering or requesting items such as guns, prescription drugs, "adult" material, alcohol, and cigarettes. Pets are OK, though. Only free and physical stuff is allowed; barters/exchanges/sales are barred, as are services offered or wanted.

I'm told that the list is best read in individual messages rather than digests (which collect dozens of messages into one e-mail) since offered items are often snatched up in just a few minutes. A reply in five minutes might be too late!

Messages are transmitted by the Yahoo! Groups Web site <groups.yahoo.com>, so list archives can be searched. This allows making sure that no "Taken" or "Received" has been sent for the "Offer" or "Wanted" you're about to answer.

Donors can decide which request gets the goods. First-reply-wins is a fine approach, but some decide based on why a person needs something. Businesses can use Freecycle to dispose of goods—for example computing equipment that's usable but not marketable. A company with 25 monitors might offer them to a Freecycle list—perhaps specifying minimum pickup of five. So smaller companies, recycling organizations, or community-minded individuals could collect and redistribute them where they're needed.

A very unscientific analysis of about 40 postings divided into 16 Offers, 12 Takens, 10 Wanteds, and two Receiveds—a very respectable success rate for Offers and Wanteds! As of when I'm writing this, more than 2,000 large and small communities have Freecycle groups with more than 700,000 members. And the Web site gives step-by-step instructions for starting one where there is none. Go forth and Freecycle!

Gabe Goldberg is APCUG Advisor and AARP Columnist, Contact him at <gabe@gabegold.com>. This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <www.aarp.org/computers> © AARP 2004/2005.

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HandySnap
Software Review
By Bob Clyne
DATA BUS
Associate Editor

HandySnap is a screen capture utility from WisePixel Multimedia <http://www.wisepixel.com>. It is about a 1.9 MiB download, and the installation is quick and painless. The trial version is fully functional for 30 days. When you purchase the product, they furnish you with a license key to unlock it, and when unlocked it works without restrictions for an unlimited period. The license permits you to install HandySnap on multiple computers for use by the same person or one computer to be used by several people.

HandySnap generates a small toolbox (see graphic) on the screen, which lets you access its functions. You can capture a rectangular area, capture a window, capture the entire screen, or repeat the last capture. Using the program options, you can set hotkeys for the program to perform all of these capture operations.

The center section of the toolbox contains the icons for annotating your captured material. You can add sprites from a collection of about 35 included with the program. There are additional sprites available for download and some hints for creating your own sprites on the WisePixel forum. You can also annotate your screen captures with text, including font and size control. There is a brush tool and a tool for drawing lines or arrows, rectangles and ellipses.

And you can control the color and opacity of these objects as well as move them around.

The bottom section of the toolbox allows you to save the captured screenshot to disk or copy it to the clipboard. You can also e-mail screenshots and open previously saved screenshots. The screenshots can be saved in a variety of graphic formats including BMP, JPEG, GIF, TIFF, and PNG.

I did discover that if I set the hotkeys to a combination of Alt or Ctrl and another key, when I tried to capture a dropdown menu, the menu collapsed before I got a chance to press the second key. The answer to this was to set the hotkey for capturing an active window and the hotkey for capturing a rectangle to use the shift key, e.g. shift + Print Screen. Pressing the shift key does not cause the dropdown menu to collapse the way the Alt and Ctrl keys do, so the menu remains onscreen for capture. You discover this pretty quickly, but it would have been nice if the screen where you set the hotkeys or the Help had mentioned it.

When capturing a rectangular area, the procedure is to click on one corner, release the button, and then click on the diagonally opposite corner. I found the Help a trifle ambiguous about this. In most of the programs I use, you press the mouse button and hold it while you drag to the opposite corner. In fact, HandySnap's own annotation tool does it that way, so I kept forgetting the way HandySnap does it in the capture mode. I would like to see the author change this, but it is quite useable as it is.

There is no Help button on the toolbox. Help is available via the F1 key or by opening the HandySnap Help from the Windows Start menu. Perhaps the author will add a "?" button for help in the toolbox in a future version.

HandySnap will capture splash screens, but it can be a challenge, since many of them are displayed for only a short time, and I doubt that there is anything HandySnap can do about that. The technique I found most successful on these was to use the "Capture Window" icon in the HandySnap toolbox and then click the splash screen, but you have to be quick about it with some of them.

You can set HandySnap to prompt for a file name and location when you save screenshots or to automatically save them to a designated directory using a specified name format with a numeral as the last character of the name. HandySnap increments the numeral with every save. However, if you close HandySnap and then reopen it and save screenshots, it restarts the naming sequence and overwrites your previous screenshot without warning. I think it would be better if it would check the directory for names and continue the previous sequence or at least warn the user before overwriting the file.

HandySnap does screen capture well and has a good set of capture and annotation options. The program normally costs $29, but Bob Click, the Dealsguy, has arranged for a user group member 20% discount through August 2005, as reported in his July Deals Column. Use the coupon code GRP01 to receive the discount.

Version reviewed: HandySnap Version 1.1 Build 1.1.42.0.

Vendor: WisePixel Multimedia <http://www.wisepixel.com>.

Runs under: Windows 95/98/ME/ 2000/XP.

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Everyone's A Publisher, And Blogs Are Our Printing Presses
By Gabe Goldberg

Just when we think we understand technology and its buzzwords, it all changes. E-mail, chat rooms, Web boards, instant messaging, and cell phone cameras—haven't they been around forever? But one of this year's hot words is still a bit mysterious: blog. It's neither the villain in a Star Wars movie nor a weather phenomenon: it's simply an abbreviation for "Web log." A blog is an online diary or journal, usually casual and open for all to read.

Blog topics vary as widely as the people who create them. They can be personal, like how-was-my-day recordkeeping; focus on topics such as politics, technology, religion, etc.; and include pointers to other online resources — such as other blogs!

To be interesting and effective, blogs need constant care and feeding. Blogs attract visitors, links, and buzz by being timely, so people are unlikely to visit blogs that don't frequently show new and interesting content.

But before you learn to read blogs— and it's often as simple as visiting Web sites!—you'll need a reason to do so. Searching Google for "blog" and "senior citizen" yields almost 30,000 hits. That's too many to explore, but shows that blogging offers something for all ages. So I'll explore a few interesting blogs, then describe ways to explore the

"blogosphere" (the world-wide and ever-growing collection of blogs).

Hosted on a colleague's Web site, Dr. John Huth's blog, reached at <jimbuie.blogs.com/john_huth/>, highlights his personal crusade to reduce senior citizens' isolation through computers. Recent posts include "Video-Conferencing: the Killer Application to Reduce Isolation and Depression Among the Elderly" and "Bedside Computers in Hospitals."

TravelPod <www.travelpod.com/>, an elaborate and polished Web site, describes itself as the Web's "original travel blog." The assortment of travel journals, travelogues, travelers, and destinations inspires me to hit the road! You can browse highlighted stories or search on interests. For example, having enjoyed a trip to Denmark about 15 years ago, I found dozens of bloggers discussing the country.

Web site Moreover collects news and information from thousands of editorial sites and more than a million blogs. Its "Consumer: Senior News" page <p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?index_seniors> includes varied material such as travel, insurance, retirement, and crime.

John Woolington hosts a simple but deep technology blog that would be well worth your visiting at <maturetechnology.blogspot.com/>. Titled "Technology Is Not The Simple Life," it includes observations and opinions about coping with change.

For anything-goes fun, you can go visit Wil Mosher's blog at <dailysnooze.blogspot.com/>. He's a curmudgeon and proud of it, noting that he "hides in his hole by day, emerging at night to frolic and fornicate in the moonlight... That is,

whenever he manages to get himself off the couch!"

Another personal blog is Ken's Weblog <kengory.blogspot.com/>. It proudly shows a fellow's family, friends, politics, humor, and favorite Web links. It's clear that having a blog is like having your personal TV station or magazine!

Gossip Cooler, available at <www.seniorcitizens.com/weblog/gossipcooler.html>, is a daily blog about growing older. The site it's on has useful info and links interleaved with many advertisements; since there's no hint who writes or runs the site, be careful.

A woman artist/activist/writer's blog <windchimewalker.blogspot.com/> offers her responses to world events, disability, and life. Describing herself as a "raging granny," she leaves no doubt where she stands on issues. Blogs like this show the Internet's power to share ideas and create communities by allowing readers to comment on what Patricia says.

Another simple and casual blog <www.lazydazers.com> lets you read about and see pictures of a couple's RV travels and adventures.

Finally, the Ageless Project <jenett.org/ageless/> is a fascinating compilation of Web sites (not all are blogs) illustrating that "the personal, creative side of the web is diverse and ageless."

Blogs and RSS are becoming increasingly popular and are getting good press coverage, as evidenced at <techweb.com/article/showArticle.jhtml?articleId=57700173>.

You can visit the blogs I've referenced as simple Web pages with normal hyperlinks. Many blogs are also readable via RSS (Rich Site Summary),

an Internet technology that can bring material from multiple publishers/blogs to you as it's published, without your having to visit multiple Web sites. I read RSS "feeds" via my e-mail software, Mozilla Thunderbird, and through a Web site which collects RSS feeds <www.bloglines.com/myblogs>.

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Search Engine Tips And Tricks—Beyond Google
By Richard Johnson

As helpful as is Google, it's a mistake to overlook the other search services. There's nothing wrong with turning first to Google (or another search service of your choice). It's a good idea, however, to pick out and bookmark at least a few competitors, for special situations. A good place to start is the comparison chart at <www.infopeople.org/search/chart.html>.

Both MSN Search and Yahoo! Search have undergone major recent changes, and both merit special attention. MSN Search <search.msn.com> now affords access to Encarta Encyclopedia, with a two-hour "free pass" that will be renewed with every new query. Check out also its Near Me option (akin to Google Local), that will point you to services and events in your immediate area or another area that you specify.

Yahoo! Search <search.yahoo.com> has brought out My Web to track past searches. My Web will save both the links and the actual pages (so you'll still have access should the page be removed from the Web). Yahoo will organize these saved pages as bookmarks. For details, go to <myweb.search.yahoo.com/myresults/benefits>.

Many of the following search tools are in beta, and so may become even more useful after further development. All are free to individuals.

Comparing and Augmenting Search Results

You might be surprised to learn that if you compare the top ten results from any two search engines, fewer than half of those results will likely be found at both. An excellent way to see what either Google, Yahoo, or Ask Jeeves comes up with (that your standby didn't!) is to use the Jux2 tool, at <www.jux2.com>.

Yagoohoo!gle <yagoohoogle.com> presents side-by-side Yahoo and Google results.

Another way to go is to type in your query at Topic Hunter <www.topichunter.com> and then click on the names of any of the sixteen search engines Topic Hunter supports.

Copernic Meta is the free successor to what formerly was a fee-only download. A Windows Deskbar or browser toolbar will facilitate simultaneous searches on multiple search engines. <www.copernic.com/en/products/meta>.

Special-Purpose Search Engines–Shopping

When it comes to shopping, the Web can do far more than take your money. To help you decide how to spend it, a new search engine still in beta, Become <www.become.com>, zeroes in on buying guides and product reviews (although you will find merchant links also, generally farther down).

Once you have a better idea of what to buy, you'll want to use one of the multitudinous price comparison sites. Pricing Central <pricingcentral.com>, acts like a clearing-house, utilizing the resources of many price search engines. For books, music CDs, and videos, AddALL <www.addall.com> and Books Price <www.booksprice.com> figure in shipping costs for your location. AddALL has a slightly larger bookstore database, but Books Price will calculate costs for multiple purchases.

If you like to shop by catalog, look at Catalog City <www.catalogcity.com>. For specials at local brick-and-mortar establishments, you can try Cairo <www.cairo.com> or ShopLocal <www.shoplocal.com>.

Other Special-Purpose Engines

For straightforward answers to simple questions, check out Brainboost, at <www.brainboost.com>. Promoted as an "answer engine," Brainboost asks you for plain-English questions (not search words), and its results are answers, not links. (A link will accompany each answer, for further research.) Another popular tool for factual information is Answers.com <www.answers.com>, which de-emphasizes links even further and gives more extensive answers. An optional free download lets you bring up Answers.com results by alt-clicking any word on your screen, on or off the Web.

For deciphering acronyms, you can't do better than Acronym Finder <www.acronymfinder.com>, with definitions for over 398,000 acronyms. Optional tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

To take advantage of Amazon's Search Inside the Book capability, you may want to use A9 Search, at <http://a9.com>. (A9 also features search history tracking.)

For news there are many good choices. BBC News at <news.bbc.co.uk> is excellent for international news, as is World Press at <www.worldpress.org>. For old news (as early as 1990) without the fee charged by other sources, you can try The Seattle Times, at <archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/web/index.html>. For the most up-to-date news, AlltheWeb Advanced at <snipurl.com/eljf> is excellent, and will let you sort and filter results prior to your search. CNN.com <www.cnn.com> and the revamped Yahoo! News <news.yahoo.com> are good general-purpose news sources. Most or all of these allow you to set up news alerts to e-mail you of new developments in issues of interest.

Toolbars

These days almost every search engine and its cousin has an associated toolbar for free download. In addition to the Copernic Meta toolbar (covered above), a few you might want to consider are:

Y!Q DemoBar. I really like this one, in part because it's small enough to fit easily on the same line as my Internet Explorer address bar. (To squeeze it onto that line you may want to "unlock" the IE toolbar, using the right-click menu, and shrink the address bar. You can adjust Y!Q's size, using its options menu.) The DemoBar's sole function is to enable context-based searching. Clicking it will yield results related to page text you've highlighted, optionally modified by text you've typed in its search box. <yq.search.yahoo.com/splash/demobar.html>.

Earthlink Toolbar. This is available to anyone, not just Earthlink subscribers. Its major innovation is its Scamblocker option, for guarding against phishing. It also offers a Google search box, a pop-up blocker, and clickable changing news headlines. Like Y!Q, it can be shrunk down to fit on the same line as your address bar. <www.earthlink.net/home/software/toolbar>.

MSN Toolbar. Features pop-up blocking and search term highlighting. Can be expanded to implement desktop search and form filling/password management. <toolbar.msn.com/default.aspx>.

A9 Toolbar. Gives you the ability to add notes to Web pages. Also includes pop-up blocking, search history tracking, online bookmark creation, search term highlighting, and site info. (Some have found it difficult to use.) <toolbar.a9.com>.

Yahoo! Toolbar. The big brother of the Y!Q DemoBar. Includes the DemoBar's functionality, and in addition facilitates Yahoo's My Web (see above) and spyware protection. <beta.toolbar.yahoo.com>.

Google Addenda
Overall, the best search engine is still Google. Here are nine more Google tips and tricks:

An adaptation of Google Maps will search for rental and for-sale housing around the country, in a price range you specify. For each result you'll be told whether a picture is available. Then if you choose you can link to the original listing (which is from Craigslist). Go to <www.paulrademacher.com/housing>.

Google's Search by Number feature will give you information about numbers you type in the search box. The most useful example of this is entering a phone number to use Google as a reverse directory. But other numbers can also yield valuable information. For instance, entering just the area code will bring up a link to a map of the area. You can also get information by entering UPS, USPS, and FedEx tracking numbers, Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs), and even UPC codes.

The Google Calculator can do anything your stand-alone calculator can do, and a lot more. It's especially useful for conversions, by employing the operator "in." For example, to find the number of teaspoons in two cups, you'd type "teaspoons in 2 cups" (without the quotes) in the Google search box. For myriad other uses go to <www.google.com/help/calculator.html>.

The best way to use Google News is via its Advanced News Search, at <snipurl.com/elhs>. This allows you to sort by date, limit by news source or location, specify the date range, and easily modify your search in other ways.

When typing a phrase into the search box, as with other search engines, you

enclose the phrase in quotation marks. To save yourself keystrokes when there's no text following the phrase, omit the ending quotation mark. (Google will fill that in for you.)

Google Maps can be re-centered by double-clicking, but more useful is the user's ability to drag the map area—thousands of miles if necessary!

In using Google Local, be sure to click on the links for the establishments of interest, to disclose useful data about them (which can vary considerably). Also: You can limit your Google Local searches as you please. For example, you might enter "restaurant inexpensive view," to find a low-cost restaurant with a good view.

Google's new My Search History will, from any computer, let you view by date or easily find anything you've ever searched for after signing up. Together with each of your past search queries you'll find the links you used from that search's results. (Cf. Yahoo's My Web, above.) For details, go to <www.google.com/searchhistory/help.html>.

Some of you who have attempted to implement the minus sign as a stand-in for NOT, may have had a problem resulting from the line break in a printed article. This will be resolved if you make sure there's no space between the minus sign and the (following) search term to which it applies.

I've been asked why I have described how to use Google to find a business but not a residence. The answer is that the syntax for locating a residence is rather complicated. You'll find it at <www.google.com/help/features.html#wp>. Three points, though: (1) The necessary elements must be typed in proper order. (2) Don't insert extra elements (like a street address, even if you know it). (3) In spite of what Google lays out, don't bother inserting commas between the elements. Note that both the business and residence search will include handy Google Maps links with your results.

Richard Johnson is a member of TUGNET, California <www.tugnet.org>, and you can reach him at <rj@theskillspool.org>. He is also editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization <http://theskillspool.org>.

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.

Tech News
By Sue Crane

AMD's Antitrust Suit Against Intel Advanced Micro Devices complaint accuses Intel of maintaining its monopoly in the PC processor market by illegally coercing customers around the world into using its products. The 48-page complaint alleges that Intel used illegal subsidies to win sales, and in some cases threatened companies with "severe consequences" for using or selling AMD products. Meanwhile, hoping to win the support of U.S. legislators and average computer users, AMD is publishing full-page ads in 7 U.S. newspapers, explaining why it filed suit and encouraging readers to read the full text of its 48-page complaint.

The AMD complaint is available online at <http://www.amd.com/us-en/assets/content_type/DownloadableAssets/AMD-Intel_Full_Complaint.pdf>.

Coming Soon: 30GB 1-inch Drive
A Japanese university has shown a prototype 10GB 1-inch hard disk drive that packs data on the disk surface more densely than existing hard drives with an areal density—the number of bits per unit of disk surface areal—of 138 gigabits per square inch. The drive uses perpendicular recording technology to achieve its higher areal density, The Japanese researchers project they will be able to boost the areal density of 1-inch disks to about 500-gigabits per square inch in 2007. This could enable 1-inch drives to have capacities as high as 30GB a few years from now. Currently, the highest-capacity 1-inch drives on sale store a maximum of 6GB of data.

Court Rules Against File-Swapping
In a unanimous decision justices ruled: Companies that build businesses with the active intent of encouraging copyright infringement should be held liable for their customers' illegal actions. The decision will likely reshape the Internet landscape in which file swapping has become commonplace.

Man vs. SuperComputer
Michael Adams, United Kingdom's strongest chess player, is the latest player to take on a supercomputer. Adams and the Hydra computer will play up to 6 games for a prize fund of $150,000. Some experts are already predicting that Hydra will win the contest. But correspondence chess grandmaster Arno Nickel, who recently beat Hydra 2-0 in a correspondence match, has predicted that Adams could secure a 3-3 draw. According to the team that developed Hydra, it can calculate 200 million moves per second and see up to 40 moves ahead.

Tired Of Waiting For Windows XP?
Giga-byte Technology has stumbled upon a faster way to boot up PCs based on the Windows XP operating system.

It is iRam, a PC add-in card with four DDR DRAM memory slots, designed to be used as a PC drive. The iRam uses DRAM to store information; data can be retrieved up to 60 times faster. The iRam holds up to 4Gb of DRAM in four memory slots. The card fits into a standard PCI slot, which provides power, and it uses a SATA (Serial ATA) connection for data transfer. If the PC is unplugged, the iRam has an on-board battery for emergency power that can last up to 12 hours. The iRam will be available in July.

Laptop Batteries Recalled
Batteries in some notebook computers from Fujitsu Siemens can overheat, with a risk of fire. The company has recalled the batteries in some of its Amilo notebook computers, and will replace affected batteries free of charge.

No IE7 For Win 2K
According to an unnamed employee, Microsoft will not be releasing IE 7 for Windows 2000, as this would involve a lot of work for an operating system that is in the later stages of its lifecycle, and some of the security work in IE 7 relies on operating system functionality in XP SP2. Win 2K users argue that Microsoft is committed to provide extended support to Windows 2000 through 2010. Microsoft was also criticized for building a Web browser that cannot run independently of the operating system. IE7 will be available in beta this

summer, offering improved security features, basic tabbed browsing, and improved standards support, including support for CSS 2 and PNG transparencies.

Digitally Enhanced Photos May Be "Too Good"

Kacie Powell, a photographer for Centre College in Danville, Ky., tried to get some digital photo shots printed at WalMart, but employees said they looked "too professional." She ended up signing an affidavit that included pictures of college employees who were authorized to print her pictures. When a colleague, whose portrait was included among the authorized photographers, went to WalMart with some candid shots from graduation, she got turned down too. Photo Labs, fearful of being sued by professional photographers, are in a tough spot: Should they anger their customers or risk a lawsuit? Don't be surprised if your digitally enhanced personal photos are turned down by WalMart and other fast-photo labs.

Do The Walls Have Ears?

The experimental system—which consists of a series of sensors under a baby's mattress and a camera mounted on a wall—will monitor a child's heart rate, temperature, and movement; stream video of the infant; and even take pictures. Captured data is sent to a parent's PC.

In another experiment, researchers have tagged all of the items in a person's house with RFID sensors that effectively will tell a remote computer whether the occupant has moved a spoon or turned on the television. Though it might sound Orwellian in the abstract, the system is being designed to provide relatives or professional caregivers information on the daily habits of the elderly.

$100 Computer

A little-known company called Novatium plans to offer a stripped-down home computer for about $70 or $75. Adding a monitor doubles the price to $150, but the company will offer used displays to keep the cost down.

Porn Gets Its Own Domain

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) that oversees Internet addresses has approved a new online neighborhood specifically for pornographic Web sites: the .xxx domain. Proponents say this will help parents screen out the porn sites for their children, but other groups argue that it's not a reliable safeguard until its mandatory.

Sue Crane is Vice President & Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, California, <www.bbcc.org>. Contact her at <Sue.crane@charter.net>.

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Smiths Creek And Port Huron, Michigan
By Bob Click
The DealsGuy

Smiths Creek

Smiths Creek, Michigan has a bit of history that you may all be able to relate to, even though it is not much more than a four-corners. The Grand Trunk Railroad has a rail line going from Port Huron, MI to Detroit that runs through Smiths Creek.

Many will remember the story about the great inventor, Thomas Edison, who during his boyhood sold newspapers on the train. He had a laboratory set up in the train depot in Smiths Creek where he performed his experiments and spent a lot of time. He also had a small lab set up in the mail car on the train. You may remember from your history that he accidentally started a fire in the mail car and was kicked off the train. It so happens that the original train depot from Smiths Creek, MI (and lab) was purchased from the Grand Trunk and moved to world famous Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. Should you ever visit Greenfield Village, you will see it there well preserved, including the Edison laboratory.

Port Huron

The Grand Trunk Railroad had a tunnel bored beneath the St. Clair River (1/2 mile wide separating US from Canada) in the early part of the century using a unique boring machine developed by a German company. The tunnel was strictly for railway use. It is always a great place for people to sneak through to the US, since the Border Patrol is spread thin, considering all the boat traffic in the area. Boats are also popular for transporting contraband across the river. The lengthy shoreline to patrol also complicates things.

Over the years, trains have gotten larger and higher, so it eventually became necessary to bore a new and larger tunnel, which was completed in 1998 using a newly designed boring machine of the same type, made by the same company. This event was important enough to attract national news coverage when the boring machine finally broke through on the American side; in fact, within sight of the Amtrak depot. The old tunnel is still intact, but is expected to be sealed on each end.It might also be worth noting that the Detroit Water Company developed a tunnel several miles north of Port Huron, MI, boring under Lake Huron for about 1/2 mile to construct a giant water intake for the purpose of supplying water for the city of Detroit and other surrounding

Letter From The Editor

E-Mail Annoyances

1. A friend recently sent me some photographs by e-mail, and they were 3.6 Megabytes. It took about an hour to download them since I am on a dial up line that transmits at only 26.4 kbps (modem max port speed=115200). During that hour the other seven e-mail messages in my inbox were unavailable to me, as was the Internet, my Fax line, and my second voice telephone. I wish people wouldn't do that to me. I get upset whenever I open my inbox and see more than about 200 kB of messages.

2. Several people send me e-mail messages that simply say "See the attached." The attachment is a little yellow envelope that contains the message they want me to read. I have to download the attachment to "My Documents," go find it, and then open it to see the message. A big nuisance. Why do they do that?

Bill

cities. They built a water treatment plant and use giant pumping stations to move the water to Detroit. During the construction of that water pipeline, it was popular for motorcyclists to remove an access cover and lower their motorcycle down into the pipeline so they could drive for miles inside that large pipe leading to Detroit. Very dangerous, but you know people.
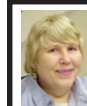
At one point during the drilling of that tunnel, methane gas in the ground caused an explosion that killed many of the people working to construct the tunnel. There are a few stories about people who took that day off and accidently got lucky. Such as the guy who went over to Canada and got drunk the night before. He ended up spending the night in jail, preventing him from reporting for work on the day of the explosion. Kind of ironic, but that was his lucky day, wouldn't you say?

An International bridge was built that opened in 1937 called the Blue Water Bridge. It is two and one half miles long from end to end and high enough for lake freighters and ocean going vessels, (something like 280 feet above the water), to pass under it. It spans the 1/2 mile wide St. Clair river dividing Port Huron, MI. and Sarnia, Ontario. It was constructed starting at both sides, and when the center span was put into place, it was only half a bolt hole off. Of course there are expansion joints throughout the bridge to compensate for temperature.

My family's gravel quarry supplied gravel for the Blue Water Bridge's giant footings during the construction of it. It was considered the longest cantilever bridge in the world. I don't know if it still bears that distinction or not. Since then, another bridge was built next to

the old one to help take care of the high volumn of autos and trucks traveling across the St. Clain river these days. The furor over the design of the new bridge is another story.

Much of the truck volume is because certain trucks are not permitted to use the Ambassador bridge, which crosses the Detroit river in Detroit. The original Blue Water Bridge was closed for refurbishing when the new bridge opened, but the original one has now also been reopened.

BOARD MEETING
7/10/05
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present
President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Chester Blechinger Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate, and Members at Large, Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

Old Business
Treasurer Chester Blechinger stated that the balance on hand is $6357.73. The membership stands at 78. It is time for Jerry Comptois, Al Gruber, and Dr. Phillip Hertz to renew their memberships. Richard Jackson reported on the telephone calls he made to those whose memberships have expired.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Warner Mach $7.10 for refreshments. Chuck Moery seconded the motion and it was carried.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Tom Callow
Interim Chairman

Aug. 14: NetMAX DeskTOP: Damon Green of NetMAX, a division of Cybernet Systems Corp., will demonstrate its Open Source Linux desktop distribution called NetMAX DeskTOP, an alternative to Windows and Microsoft Office.

Aug. 14: Everything You Wanted To Know About Google: SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate the many different features and programs available from Google.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

New Chairman Sought
SIG IBM Intermediate is looking for a new Chairman to coordinate activities and secure speakers. If you can suggest candidates, please do.

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

SEMCO still is in need of a chairman for the SIG-IBM Intermediate. Gary DeNise will make a plea at the general meeting.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Warner Mach seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

July Meeting Attendance: 24

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

Oct. 3: (first Monday)(Sept.5 is Labor Day), 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.**

September 2005 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., Aug. 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. Contact the Editor (address Page 2).

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

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)
Aug. 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)
Sept. 7–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <http://
www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: NetMax, A New Linux Desktop.

DCOM Computer Club
Aug. 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)
Aug. 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)
Sept. 13–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817
(enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn/FACE/index.html>.

MacGroup Detroit
Aug. 21–Sunday, 3pm–5pm; Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (at Telegraph),
Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>.
Topic: 19th Anniversary Celebration.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
Aug. 20–Saturday (3rd Saturday)(July meeting canceled); 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. Topic:
Digital Photography; What To Do With Those Great Vacation Pictures.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group
Aug. 11–(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>.

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)
Sept. 6–Tuesday 7:30pm, (1st Tuesday)(No meetings July & Aug.), Carpathia Club,
38000 Utica Rd, Sterling Heights. Pres. Don VanSyckel at <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-
731-9232; Web: <http:/www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. Topic: Find What You
Want On The Internet.

SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.)
Aug. 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
Aug. 13–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.

**JULY
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Carol Sanzi
Betty MacKenzie

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
Genealogy: Cook
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz
Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

MS Office for Windows: Callow
MS Word: Clyne
Networking: Callow
Novell Netware: Yuhasz
Quicken: Clyne
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

SEMCO CALENDAR—August/September

ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

August 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: NetMAX DeskTOP:** Damon Green of NetMAX, a division of Cybernet Systems Corp.,will demonstrate its Open Source Linux desktop distribution called NetMAX DeskTOP, an alternative to Windows and Microsoft Office.

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: Everything You Wanted To Know About Google:** SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate the many different features and programs available from Google.
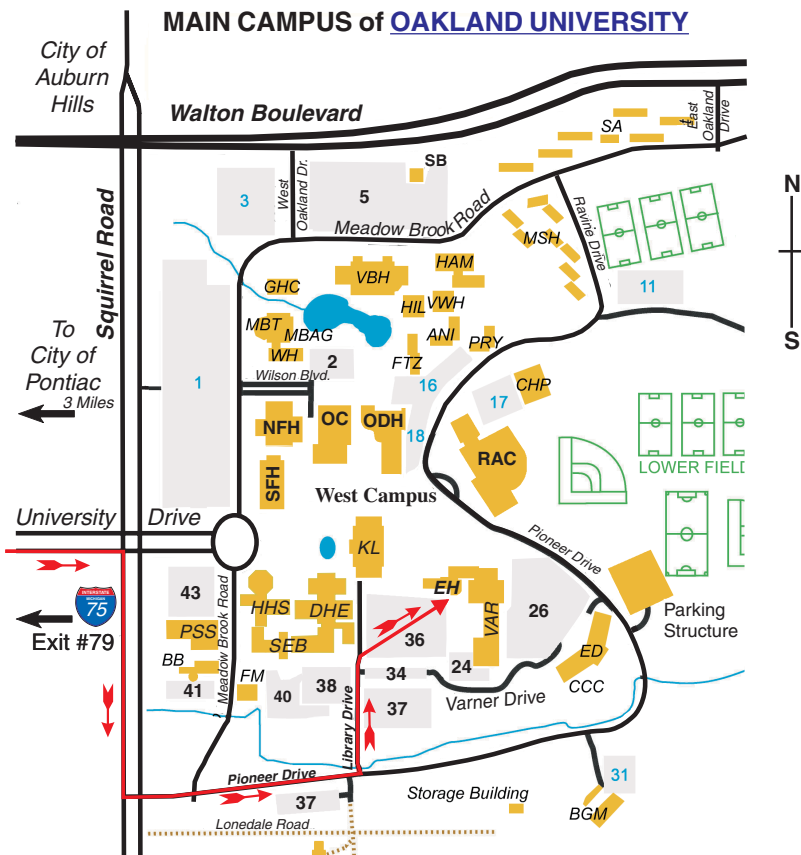
SIG-ADVANCED , **Oct. 3 –MONDAY, 6:45 pm,** (Sept. 5 is Labor Day), Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd.,Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway: take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd. and turn right. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.**

Sept.11 –SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday). **SEMCO**, 1:30 pm. **Special Guest is Gene Barlow of User Group Relations.**

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 Campus

Meadow Brook Road

Pioneer Drive

Varner Drive

Lonedale Road

Storage Building

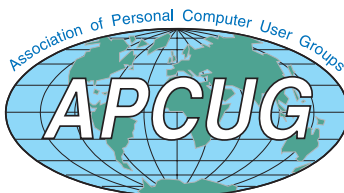Parking Structure

LOWER FIELD

West Campus

N — S

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)
August 14
September 11

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