SEMCO

DATA BUS

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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

Once, during a McDonalds show, I was a guard for the largest and most complete dinosaur skeleton ever found. It was discovered by Sue Henderson, and McDonalds Corp. sponsored the recovery. I guess they knew better than to let me guard any of the food.

I just worked the ASIS (American Society of Industrial Security) <http://www.asisonline.org> show. Colin Powell was one of the featured speakers. Exhibits occupied about 700,000 sq. ft., and attendance was 20,000, their best ever. I was assigned to the Videoprotein <http://www.videoprotein.com> booth, whose owner and founder, Anthony Pugliese, is a collector of many unique items. In 1991 he bought the 38-caliber Colt Special that Jack Ruby used to shoot Lee Harvey Oswald on live TV. Mr. Pugliese purchased it at an auction from Jack Ruby's brother who had acquired it from the FBI 20 years after the shooting and needed money for legal fees. Mr. Pugliese paid $250,000, and it is now valued at about seven million.

Being stationed there prevented me from browsing the show much, but I did check out some of the biometric lock products. Placing your finger on a pad or scanning your eye iris will open a lock, or initiate other functions if you like. There were also various security gates, special roll up doors, and too many unique products to mention here. One company had a stranded steel cable to install around your property that, if breached, will tell you exactly where it happened and can even initiate camera action. Some cameras can detect motion and initiate a camera sequence to follow the action, also notifying the office of the activity. You could easily spend two days or more at that show. One evening the show rented Universal Studios for the attendees, and my wife and I worked checking the attendees entering. Since there were drinks inside, we placed wristbands on people under the age of 21 identifying them as minors to bartenders, who also checked people. Food and drinks of all kinds were all free inside the park, and attendees enjoyed all the rides free. Too bad you missed that show!

Zio Corp. Is Acquired

I'm sorry that the PDF files with the rebate forms for the Zio Corp. products were not posted on my Web site. It turns out that Zio Corp. was acquired by SmartDisk, and I have to assume that everybody was very busy with whatever changes would take place. However, Zio has some of the rebate forms posted on their own Web site, and I hope what was there filled your needs.

What's In Your Computer?

Here is another data gatherer that sounds good. Bob Balogh writes a monthly column called "Window Pains" for Boca Bits, newsletter of the Boca Raton Computer Society Inc., and it's always very informative. In the May 05 issue,

he wrote about Everest Home Edition 1.51 (version 2.20 at this writing) that will collect all the important information about your computer. I won't list all the information it collects here, but you can find that out at <http://www.lavalys.com>. Best of all, the home edition is free. Bob is not the only person who authors informative columns each month in Boca Bits, and you can access their newsletter at <http://www.brcs.org>. You'll find it interesting.

Punch Software

I hope some of you took advantage of the rebates for Punch! Software products that offer excellent tools for designing your home or for your remodeling project. Because of updates, I had to pull the ones planned for this month at the last minute, but hope to feature their products again soon.

What's a Skin Clock?

(An edited, to shorten, announcement received in June offering a discount.)

"Our company has released the personal assistant for Windows—Skin Clock. It is a personal reminder integrated with a new trendy tray clock. We would like to inform all user group people about a 25% discount as a part of our launching campaign.

"Best regards,
Eugene Kryukov, CEO Alcynosoft <eugene@alcyonesoft.com>.

"With Alcyonsoft You Needn't Choose Between Style and Functionality. Skin Clock Has Plenty of Both.

"June 23, 2005—Alcyonesoft announces today the launch of its Windows integrated personal assistant. Skin Clock has become an advanced replacement for the standard Windows clock. Besides a choice of professionally designed skins for your new system tray clock, the program features personal notification service and time synchronizer. Just make your alarm center know your appointment time or a report deadline, and it will remind you what you have on the agenda. The only other thing your personal assistant needs to know is whether you prefer just a note, or a note and a pleasant chime, or should it launch an application for you.

"Skin Clock is shipped with a portfolio of skins, ranging from neo-modern to futuristic to classic. By grading the hue of the clock panel you can easily integrate it into your desktop color scheme. You can synchronize your system clock with an Internet time server. Alternatively, you can rely on automatic synchronization. An unbounded range of ways to customize your Skin Clock can be found in the Options menu.

"Skin Clock v.1.0 Features at a Glance:

-Highly customizable intuitive interface;

-System tray integration;

-A portfolio of skins for the time panel;

-Alarm center with a choice of reminder options;

-Automatic and manual time synchronization.

"Pricing and Availability:

"Skin Clock 1.0 runs under Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003 server platforms and costs $29.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Free technical support is extended to all registered users. A trial version is available as a free download at <http://www.skin-clock.com/files/skinclock.zip>. More information

about Alcyonsoft can be found on the official website at <http://www.alcyonesoft.com>.

"Product page link: <http://www.skin-clock.com>.

"E-mail:<eugene@alcyonesoft.com>."

Announcement For IntroWizard. (Edited to shorten. They offer a discount.)

"Our company, IntroWizard, has released IntroWizard Flash Website Builder 1.0. This new wizard-style Web site designer is helpful for anyone who wants to create a professional-looking Flash Web site, but doesn't have any knowledge of HTML and Flash. Its special feature is the automatic text Web site creation for indexing the content of a Flash Web site in search engines. We also would like to offer all members of your user group a special discount— 15% off the purchase of IntroWizard Flash Website Builder 1.0 or Flash4D 4.4. This discount is only available until December, 2005. Use the links below:

"Discount 15% Off Links:

"Buy IntroWizard Flash Website Builder v1.0:<http://www.introwizard.com/store/fwb-15off.php>.

"Buy Flash4D, Flash Intro Builder v4.4:<http://www.introwizard.com/store/f4d-15off.php>.

"Adan Vielma.

"E-mail:<Adan@IntroWizard.com>.

"MCALLEN, Texas—September 13, 2005: IntroWizard today announces the release of version 1.0 of IntroWizard Flash Website Builder. Using its point-and-click environment, you can build a Web site simply by selecting a design, typing in your content, and adding images.

"Over 20 design templates help you to jump-start your Web site project with professional layouts. Once the layout is chosen, the Customize Website wizard guides you through all customization stages from defining the background color, title, slogan, width, and height to specifying the website sections and entering content. Your Web site may contain up to 13 sections. A section contains its own text, which may be complemented by up to 4 images. The program lets you insert your own images or choose from the collection of 30 stock images included free.

"You can integrate Flash plug-ins, such as Flash poll, chat box, or guestbook, to add a level of interactivity to your Web site. To make the Web site visible in search engines, you can add meta keywords and descriptions to the Web site. Create a text Web site, a text copy of your Flash Web site. The text Web site lets you reach out to search engines, while enjoying the aesthetic benefits of the Flash technology. If you select to use the text Web site creation feature, then the text Web site is created automatically on the basis of the Flash Web site content.

"IntroWizard Flash Website Builder Benefits:

-Point-and-click technology of creating a Flash Web site;

-No need to fork out money to designers and programmers;

-No subscription fees or restrictions on the amount of Web sites you can create for yourself or your customers;

-Automatic text Web site creation to make a Flash Web site visible in search engines;

-Affordable price, only $49.95."

"Pricing and Availability:

"IntroWizard Flash Website Builder runs under Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP and costs $49.95 (USD). Registered customers are entitled to non-

watermarked designs and technical support. A 15-day fully functional evaluation version of IntroWizard Flash Website Builder is available as a free download by going to <http://www.introwizard.com/trial/flash-website-builder-trial.exe> (3.49 Mb).

"For more information, please visit <http://www.introwizard.com>.

"Product page link: <http://www.introwizard.com/flash-website-builder>."

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>.

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Sharing Your World
By Vinny Labash

If the thought of overcoming technical hurdles has deterred you from creating your own web-based journal, stop fretting. Modern web tools make creating your own blog easier than it's ever been. The term blog is nothing more than a shortened version of weblog. The term "weblog" was created by Jorn Barger in December, 1997, and Peter Merholz introduced the short version "blog" in 1999. Blog came to be interpreted also as a verb, to blog, meaning "to edit or post to one's weblog."

Electronic communities existed long before people discovered the Internet. The AP wire was similar to a large chat room where there were electronic discussions. Another pre-web electronic community, ham radio, allowed individuals who set up their own broadcast equipment to communicate with others directly. Ham radio also had logs called "glogs" that were personal diaries. The concept is not new.

Most individuals who use the Internet have been like audiences watching TV, passive consumers of content, not active creators. Those who wanted to become content authors either hired someone to do it for them or went the professional design route, involving applications such as Dreamweaver and FrontPage. Those with little technical background also had to cope with the complexities of File Transfer Protocol. These proved to be formidable barriers. Not only did this make web publishing beyond the grasp of most people, it created a high priesthood of webmasters and web designers. Even those with strong technical abilities were faced with content management headaches as their sites grew larger.

The only tool an ordinary person had to communicate with others on the web was e-mail. Since web browsers are totally unsuitable for content creation, alternate tools such as Outlook and Eudora were fashioned. E-mail was the force that made the Web the playground of the common folk. Its very success may be the cause of its undoing, because e-mail is in danger of being strangled by spam.

The world's most gigantic digital conversation was born six years ago when blogger.com was started. At first, hardly anyone noticed. Thousands of Web sites come and go all the time, but blogger.com offered something unique.

Anyone who wanted one could have a free blog. There was no charge to access the blog creation tools, and the site provided free space to anyone who wanted to host a blog. Once discovered, millions logged on and created their own web logs.

Blogs have changed the way educational institutions do research. Traditional journalists have been blasted out of their comfort zones, being continually challenged to defend their printed statements. They are now being held to the same standards of accountability they have long demanded from others. Families are using blogs to keep in touch in ways that were never before possible. Politicians and political organizations are using blog sites to raise funds.

Corporate entities are using blogs to find out what excites customers, and to track what they really think about the company and why. Wisely used, blogs could become the ultimate marketing tool, free of all the negativity associated with spam.

Starting your own blog is no longer a formidable task. If you are simply curious and want to see what it's like to have your own blog, the only investment you need to make is your time. If you have an irrepressible urge to share your ideas, philosophy, comments or conclusions with everyone else on the planet, you are merely a few short easy steps away.

Pay homage to the original by visiting <http://www.blogger.com> and follow directions. Another direction is to go to Google and search on "starting a blog." Your only difficulty will be deciding when, not how, to start.

Vinny Labash is a member of the Sarasota PC User Group in Florida <*www.spcug.org* >. *You can reach him at <vlabash@comcast.net>.*

Wireless Instant Messaging Makes Conversations Portable
By Gabe Goldberg

I love technology competition. Having multiple ways to meet a need gives consumers choices; it also encourages vendors to innovate, rather than offering take-it-or-leave-it products.

Being accustomed to PC-based instant messaging (IM), and not enjoying queuing up for Internet access, I was intrigued by wireless IM letting people communicate and have IM-fun without occupying prime family "real estate"—the PC. Zipit and IMfree, taking different approaches to do this, may eliminate your family traffic jams. There's no monthly fee with either device.

Both handheld devices have almost-normal keyboard layouts, but are too small for touch typing. They're good for thumbing or index-fingering and will be quickly comfortable for anyone used to cell phone text messaging. Multi-line displays, scrollable one line-at-a-time, are mostly very readable, except for the way that IMfree displays screen names with messages: hard-to-read

7

white-on-black text with sender/ receiver distinguished by upper and lower case letters.

On both devices, slightly odd shift keys allow entering capital letters and numbers/symbols (which don't appear on usual keys); it's all easy to get used to. IMfree sends twelve specific smileys (emoticons like ;-) for winking) with button combinations; Zipit allocates three buttons to specific smileys and allows setting three others to your choice of symbols—though they're hard to distinguish. Or you can just enter characters to form smileys!

My wife called both devices "cute," liking Zipit because it has a lid protecting screen/keyboard, and IMfree because it has a modern look.

More significant is how the units communicate. IMfree includes software and a base station that plugs into a PC USB port; handheld range is about 150 feet. Zipit uses a WiFi network with a range of about 300 feet. (If you don't know what WiFi is, you probably don't have it. It adds to Internet connectivity, typically cable or DSL. It's also available in "hot spots" like coffee shops.)

IMfree base stations can talk to seven handhelds at once, and handhelds can move among base stations; and many Zipits can access a WiFi network at once, so they're both great for at-home IMfests or using IM when visiting or traveling. Unfortunately, IMfree handhelds aren't sold without base stations.

Both devices can carry on multiple conversations. You select IMfree conversations with instant button pushes; Zipit conversations are selected from a pop-up scrollable buddy list, slightly less convenient. If you're switching among conversations, be careful to send messages to the person you intend!

IMfree supports only AOL Instant Messenger (AIM); Zipit supports AIM, MSN, and Yahoo. IMfree supports chat rooms and has flexible/powerful parental controls; Zipit only supports instant messaging and lacks such controls. IMfree conversations are private, not shared with the base PC unless the IM account is also logged on there. A screen name can't be logged onto Zipit and a PC at the same time, so Zipit dialogues are private.

Both devices were impressively simple to install. Each has a clear manual, worth reading for learning features, and many customization options (alert sounds, display settings, etc.). Neither screen is backlit; they're both reasonably easy to read in normal lighting. Zipit's lid-mounted screen is easy to angle for best viewing.

Both powerful units share and can modify buddy lists (but Zipit can't create a screen name; you must have or visit a PC for that). On both, idle buddies are flagged, and you're notified by tone and visual indicator if a message arrives from a conversation not currently displayed.

Zipit comes in many tasty colors and promises automatic updates adding features such as streaming music.

There's a great bottom line to this story: I liked both these low-cost devices, and they're different enough to fit a variety of needs. So have fun with your IM, wherever your keyboard and handheld may take you.

Company: Motorola.

Product: Motorola Personal Instant Messenger Mx240 (IMfree).

Price: $50 or less online—shop around!

URL: <broadband.motorola.com/consumers/products/imfree/>.

Company: Aeronix Consumer Media Systems.

Product: Zipit Wireless Messenger.
Price: $100.

URL: <www.zipitwireless.com>.

The Mystery Of File Extensions Explained
By Dave Gerber

GIF, JPG, TXT, DOC, HTML, WAV, BMP, ETC. You'll see them over and over again as you encounter manuals, Web sites, and anything related to your computer. Tons of file extensions. Whole pickup truck loads of 'em running back and forth on the info highway.

File extensions are easy enough to understand, and with just a bit of history, you'll know everything you need to know about files, and not a bit more.

Back in the DOS days (DOS stands for Disk Operating System), before the invention of Windows, every file had to be named with a maximum of 8 characters, and could include a three letter "file extension."

For example, lets say you want to save that recipe for Quevos Rancheros. You were forced to use a maximum of 8 characters. So you call it "queranch."

(Hmm, in Spanish, that's like, "What ranch?" Well, at least that's a loose translation.)

You were limited. Severely. So now along comes the long file name. You can now use a whole mess of characters, if you want, calling your file "My greatest recipe using eggs and tortillas since the invention of the wheel." The sentence between the quote marks is the name of the file, or "filename."

The stated character limit is 255, but in reality it comes in just a tad under, like 253 or something. The techies can quibble over that. Regardless, it's l-o-n-g. And more than adequate to describe the content of your creation!

Now, notice that many files have extensions. They all do, really. In fact, your computer doesn't know what to do with a file if it doesn't have an extension.

The extension is the three letter part following the main name. (You didn't see an extension on my quevos rancheros example, because I left it off.) Here's an example:

"My Word processing report.doc"

The ".doc" part of the file's name tells Windows to use the program that's associated with .doc files to open it. So, let's say you've got Microsoft Word installed. Whenever the Windows operating system realizes you've clicked a file with the extension ".doc" it fires up Word, and Word opens the file.

There are lots of file extensions. Here's a table for you that includes a few common file types you may encounter during your web travels.

Common file types:

Extension Type of file:

txt: Text File, such as Notepad produces.

doc: Document File, for example, MS Word.

gif: Graphics Interchange Format (graphics).

jpg: Joint Photographic Experts Group (graphics).

htm: Hypertext Markup (special coded text files).

html: Hypertext Markup Language (ditto).

zip: Compressed file requiring special software to decompress the file.

tar: Same as zip. Just another compression style.

pdf: Portable Document Format (universal text file).

wav: Sound files.

bmp: Bitmap files (graphics).

If you try to open a file extension that's unregistered (unregistered means Windows doesn't know what to do with it because there's no association in the Windows Registry), Windows throws the "Open With" dialog box at you.

This dialog box lets you decide what program to open the file with. For example, I tried to open the file named 'java.usj' and got the "Open With" dialog box. Since nothing on my computer is set up to edit or open a '.usj' file, I have to locate and use a program that "understands" that type of file extension. Now that's another trick altogether!

Commonly, people will send Power Point presentation files or Microsoft Publisher files as attachments to people who don't have Microsoft Office installed on their computer. So those files cannot be viewed unless the appropriate software is installed.

Dave Gerber is a Director of the Sarasota PCUG in Florida, and publishes Bits & Bytes, a periodic newsletter for the members of the Sarasota PC User Group <www.spcug.org>. Contact him at <http://davebytes.com/>.

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

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The New, The Best, And The Worst
By Pim Borman

Hard Drive Too Small?
If you think a 500 GB is still not big enough, help is on the way, in what seems to be an obvious way. The magnetic elements on current hard drives are lying down on the job, but now several manufacturers, including Hitachi and Seagate, have figured out a way to make the lazy critters stand up on the disk and squeeze them closer together. It must be easier said than done, considering how long it took to implement this technology, but now Seagate is announcing a new 2.5" minidisk, named Momentus, that will hold 160 GB, 20% more than the highest-capacity 2.5" drives currently available. It sounds like magic, and the name, Momentus, suggests that Harry Potter had something to do with it. The new disks will be shipped early next year. Seagate anticipates that regular hard drive capacity will jump to 2500

GB (2.5 TB) in 3-5 years. (PC Magazine, 8/9/05).

How Much Is That Program In The Windows?

In the good old days, when you purchased the latest version of MS-DOS you were free to install it on as many computers as you owned, and many a copy was shared with friends and neighbors as well. That has changed, as we all know, and many expensive programs can only be installed on a single computer, whether we like it or not.

Large commercial programs used in the business world have usually been licensed per seat, based on the number of computers the program was installed on. Some small engineering companies that obtained a single copy of expensive Autodesk and used it on multiple computers were fined and lost their use of the program when they got caught.

As CPUs have been getting faster, computer productivity has gone up, to the benefit of the users. Although most providers have increased their license fees to some extent as the programs improved, fees have mostly continued to be charged per seat or per CPU.

Now the trend to faster computers increases the number of CPUs on a single chip instead of making single ones faster, and some software companies want to charge their fees on a per CPU basis. They are mainly concerned about the many back-room computers used as servers dishing out data over computer networks to employees. Oracle and IBM have been in the forefront of the pricing battles, but seem to be compromising on an individual basis. Microsoft has unexpectedly taken the side of the users and licenses its software at the same cost for single-core or multiple-core processors. That may have something to do with the threat of Linux and its Open Source programming model that is looking more and more attractive to many businesses as the cost of Windows-based software keeps increasing. (The Economist, 7/16/05, thanks to Louis Ritz)

Too Much Security?

Most of us live in homes with maybe two locks on the front and back doors, possibly with an added bolt for extra security at night. That will keep most amateur burglars out, but a determined crook will find a way to get in anyhow.

The same goes for routers. To keep occasional snoopers out of your network takes only a few simple changes to be made on the router's access page.

• Replace the default password needed to access the set up screen with a secure one that is easy to remember (an old street address is good, as it contains letters and numbers). Also change the default user name, if your router lets you.

• On the wireless access page change the SSID name to a secure one.

• On the same page uncheck the option to broadcast the SSID name.

Forget about all the other security options, including WEP or WPA encryption, unless someone could have good reason to spend lots of time and talent guessing your setup information and ruin you in doing so. Just because it can be done doesn't mean anyone will actually go to the trouble! Just make sure to write down the user name, password, and the SSID. And if you forget anyway, it only takes a few minutes to reset the router all over again.

Windows Tips And Tricks

The June 28, 2005 edition of PC Magazine carried a large number of

Tips and Tricks for Windows, mostly contributed by PCM's lead analyst Neal Rubenking. Try to get hold of a copy to see for yourself. Here are some that caught my eye.

If an error message indicates that a system file is missing or corrupted, you may be able to recover it from the Windows disk. Insert the Windows system disk and select Search from the Start menu. Use the name of the file you are looking for, but replace the last character of the extension with an underscore; e.g. Notepad.ex_ instead of Notepad.exe. Make a note of where you found it, and then use some good, old-fashioned DOS command to expand that file and install it on your hard drive where it belongs. Use Start…Run and in the window that pops up type (for this example, assuming your CD ROM is labeled D:) expand D:\Setup\Notepad.ex_ C:\Windows\Notepad.exe, and that should do it. In some cases the missing file is stored in a compressed CAB file. You can find out by repeating the search with the full file name. If found, open the CAB file in Windows Explorer and simply drag the missing file to its location on your hard drive.

Another handy tip concerns access to Windows in its Safe mode, such as might be required to remove a virus infection. The manual tells you to hit F8 or DEL (depending on the make of your computer) during start up, right after the initial boot sequence completes, but before Windows starts loading. In practice, there is only a fraction of a second during which you must do this, and it may take many repeats before you finally get it right. With a USB keyboard it is impossible to do at all, since the keyboard won't be active yet at the required moment. If you miss and the system boots up in the full-fledged Windows mode, press Start…Run and type msconfig followed by the Enter key. Choose the BOOT.INI tab and check the /SAFEBOOT box. Now XP will reboot in Safe mode until you repeat the procedure and uncheck the box.

Recovered Printer Cartridge

The other night I set out to print a first birthday picture of our black-and-white Cocker Spaniel, Bonnie. As the picture emerged from the printer, an older HP-812C, the top half looked OK, but the bottom half was faded red. Clearly, one or two of the three colors in the color cartridge was depleted. Just because of such happenings, I always keep an extra cartridge in the refrigerator to keep it fresh. That may have been a bad idea.

I installed the spare cartridge, aligned it, and printed out the picture. The black snoot of the dog came out looking distinctly bluish. Back in the image editor I darkened the black parts of the image and printed it out again. Same result, distinctly bluish. Continuing the next evening, a test page indicated that the yellow color of the cyan-magenta-yellow cartridge was not printing. I used the printer's utilities to clean the cartridge and to prime the inks, without luck. I took the cartridge out and carefully cleaned the print head with 90% pure rubbing alcohol, still without success.

I was ready to give up on the cartridge and buy a new one when one more possibility occurred to me. I double-bagged the cartridge in two ZipLoc bags and immersed it for 20 minutes in a pan of hot tap water. That did the trick; Bonnie printed out just fine. From now on no more storing of color cartridges in the refrigerator!

Pim Borman is a member of the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. <swipcug@sigecom.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.

Tech News
By Sue Crane

Nothing Is Ever Really FREE
Linus Torvalds, creator of the Linux OS, has begun protecting his trademark for the term Linux. He's doing so to protect users from unauthorized and confusing use of the name. Torvalds first trademarked Linux several years ago, but has rarely defended its use. The licensing fees for Linux are modest. LMI is charging $200 to $5000 for each license; most sublicensees end up paying $200 to $500. Most Linux companies have enthusiastically agreed to the licensing terms.

AMD Asks Intel For A Duel
Major US newspapers in September showed an AMD processor standing in a boxing ring waiting for Intel to appear for a duel later this year so consumers can see who has the best dual core processor. Dual-core chips have two processor cores on a single piece of silicon, boosting performance and reducing power consumption compared to two single-core processors. AMD released its first dual-core Opteron processors earlier this year. Intel said that it will release its first dual-core server chips later this year, ahead of its original schedule. But regarding the duel, Intel was not available for comment.

PC Has Water-Cooled Radiator
NEC took the wraps off its Valuestar G Type C, a new desktop PC that has a radiator embedded in the water cooler unit built into the back of the chassis. The company said the added refrigeration will let consumers overwork the included Intel Celeron processor but keep the PC running at 30 decibels, which is whisper voice. PC noise is increasingly a concern as more powerful computers require stronger and often louder cooling systems.

New IE 7.0 Is For Windows Only!
Sources at Microsoft have announced that IE 7.0 will henceforth be referred to as Windows IE 7.0, highlighting the fact that the browser is integrated with Windows and isn't a standalone product. According to a source at Microsoft, the change signifies that IE will no longer be available for other platforms. Users should simply consider IE 7.0 to be part of Windows.

No More Textbooks?
Students at Empire High School in Vail, AZ started class this year with no textbooks. Instead, the school issued laptop computers to each of its 340 students, becoming one of the first U.S. public schools to turn away from printed textbooks. Empire High, which opened for the first time this year, was designed specifically to have a textbook-free environment.

TPMs Make E-Commerce Safer
Trusted Platform Modules, if you've never heard of them, are chips that store cryptographic information needed to unlock hard drives, authenticate network log-ons, and perform similar tasks. What is exciting about TPMs is their role in electronic transactions, because they

make sure the money and the product get to their proper destinations via "anonymous certificates." Hacking such a certificate would not give criminals access to personal information, such as credit card numbers, since the transaction is done on your side of the network, not on the server-side.

eBay Rethinks Recycling

Faster, more advanced computers, cell phones and electronics offer endless possibilities for enrichment, learning and entertainment. But as consumers and businesses keep pace with the introduction of exciting new products, we are faced with a mounting challenge: what to do with the products we're upgrading from. The Rethink Initiative brings together industry, government, and environmental organizations to offer a fresh perspective and new answers to the challenge of e-waste. On their Web site you can find information, tools and solutions that make it easy— and even profitable—to find new users for idle computers and electronics, and responsibly recycle unwanted products <http://rethink.ebay.com/ >

Sue Crane is Vice President and Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, CA. You can contact her at <sue.crane@charter.net>

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How To Record Your Cassette Music To A CD
By Bob Elgines

You already have most of the equipment you need, including a Soundboard and a Cassette player. Next, of course, things needed are a recording program, such as Musicmatch Jukebox, and a cable to connect your cassette player with your computer. This basic Jukebox software is available free by going to: <www.musicmatch.com>. (Go to JUKEBOX tab and click on "Free Jukebox download;" it is over 24 MB in size.) The cable is made up of 1/8" Phone Plugs (RS 274-284c) and a three-wire shielded cable. (Some of the older cassette players will use a larger ¼" Phone plug.)

Now we are ready to set up your computer and programs. Connect your cable between the "Output" (might be labeled Headset) of your Cassette Player and the "Line in" of your computer Sound board.

Do a right click on your Speaker icon located on the right hand side of the task bar. Select (or left click) "Adjust Audio Properties;" click on "Audio." Under "Sound Recording" click on "Volume." Select "Line in," and set the input level at approximately 20%. This may have to be changed later, so you can leave this on the screen if you wish.

Next activate Musicmatch Jukebox; then go to "Options"/ "Recorder" / "Settings." Set "Recording Format" to WAV, and "Recording Source" to LINE IN. Now click on "Advance;" set "Fadeout" to 1, and under "End of Record Notifications" uncheck "Play sound" and "Eject CD." Click OK.

On the bottom left click the red "Record" button. Another window appears with a number "one" on the right. You can click on here and change the name now or do it later. If you are going to record the complete side of the cassette under one file, then name it now; otherwise, if you are going to record one track (or song) at a time, then you can change the name later.

Now play your cassette to check out the input level for no distortion, listening to it on your computer speakers. If it is too loud, and there is distortion, then reduce the input level or the volume out of the player. Rewind the cassette.

We are ready to roll. Start your player and press the "Record" button in the lower left window. When the song is over, press the "Stop" button. Then press "Record" again, because the next song will start within a second or two. Then press "Stop;" continue this until each song is recorded from the cassette.

Now that we have them in the computer, name each one, but keep the names short. Use "Windows Explorer" and go to "My Documents" / "My Music"/ "Artist" / "Album." Here you will find your recordings, and you can rename them by doing a right click on each one. After you are finished, exit and go to your CD recording program, such as "EZ CD Creator" or "Nero." Now you can grab all of the recordings you made and make an AUDIO CD. (Do not record any faster than 8X,)

Another method can be used, and that is using MP3 sound files. If you convert from WAV to MP3 files, you can put up to 150 (or more) songs on a CD instead of just 15.

To convert the WAV files, bring up your "Jukebox" program. Go to "File" / "Convert;" then select your Source folder that contains your music files. Select "Source Data Type" and set to WAV; then click on "Select all." Next select your Destination folder and select your "Destination Data Type," setting it to MP3. Click on the start button, and it will now make MP3 files out of your selected WAV files.

After you are finished, Exit and go to your CD recording program to record your MP3 files on a CD as data files (Do not make an audio CD). This MP3-Data CD will now play in a DVD Player or a computer capable of having over 150 songs.

Bob Elgines is Editor at the Colorado River Computer Club. Lake Havasu, AZ, and can be reached at <elginesz@rraz.net>.

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Laptop Display Replacement
By Mike Borman

I have owned three different Toshiba laptop computers and was always impressed with how rugged they were. A couple of them have been used to collect CCD images from my telescope on cold and dewy nights without a problem. We have also used Toshiba laptops where I work to program and monitor Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) in industrial plants all across the tristate area without a

problem. One even had water pouring down on it accidentally at one plant, and after letting it dry out a bit, was as good as new. So this past February when I decided I needed a new laptop, I once again chose a Toshiba, a Satellite A75. This one had a very nice 15.4" Trubrite TFT display.

Last month however, I discovered that my newest Toshiba laptop would not pass the drop test. I had been using it in the living room while watching TV, and had it resting on one of the arms of my recliner (which is wide enough to support the bottom of the laptop). Unfortunately, when I got up to get something out of the kitchen, the laptop slid off the arm of the recliner and fell a little over two feet to the carpeted floor. When I picked it up I noticed that the display had a crack in the upper right hand corner. I won't repeat the words I uttered!

I decided to take the computer back to Circuit City where I bought it, to see what my options were for fixing it. They told me that accidental breakage was not covered by the City Advantage plan they had sold me in February, and it was not covered by the Toshiba warranty either. Circuit City proposed sending it off to their Service Center in Louisville to see how much it would cost to replace the display. Unfortunately, they came back with an estimate of over $1000 to fix it. A call to Toshiba informed me that replacing the screen would cost $700 plus labor and shipping. Considering that I paid $1400 for it new, either choice seemed a bit outrageous. I also found that it was not covered by my homeowner's insurance or personal articles policy.

I next decided to see if I could possibly replace the display myself.

After searching on the Internet, I found a Web site called IDParts.com that had parts for most of the major brands of laptops. I gave them a call and asked them how much a replacement LCD display would cost for my Toshiba laptop. They said $335. Since that was a lot better than paying Circuit City $1000 or buying a new laptop, I went ahead and ordered one. It arrived in less than a week. Unfortunately when I opened the package I found a display more badly broken than the one I wanted to replace! More unmentionable words were uttered.

I called IDParts, and they agreed to take back the broken display and send me a new one. The second display arrived intact a couple of days later.

My next task was to remove the existing LCD display. The IDParts Web site shows an example of a "typical" display replacement. It shows removing the little rubber pads that run around the perimeter of the display to reveal screws that hold the display together. When I removed the rubber pads from my display, however, there were only screws under the two at the bottom of the display. With some careful probing with a screwdriver I found that the top of the display just snapped together. After getting off the bezel I found that the display LCD was attached to a metal frame with several tiny Philips head screws. Before removing the screws, I had to detach (very carefully) a ribbon cable and a power cable. Then, doing all the steps above in reverse, I installed the new LCD display. My main worry was with reattaching the ribbon cable. It was difficult to line up the two halves of the connector and feel whether it was properly connected. The ribbon cable was just barely long enough to

reach the connector on the new LCD. Fortunately I did it right, and the new display works fine again!

Mike Borman is a member of the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. and an engineer with Three I Engineering, Inc. in Evansville. He is past president of the Evansville Astronomical Society and has won national awards for astrophotography and model rocket building. His Web site is <http://members.sigecom.net/mborman/>.

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Understanding The Stock Market
Author Unknown

BULL MARKET–A random market movement causing an investor to mistake himself for a big financial genius.

BROKER–What my broker made me.

"BUY, BUY"–A flight attendant making a market recommendation as you step off the plane.

STANDARD & POOR–Your life in a nutshell.

YAHOO–What you yell after selling it to some poor sucker for $240 per share.

WINDOWS 2000–What you jump out of when you're the sucker that bought Yahoo @ $240 per share.

PROFIT–Religious guy who talks to God.

Letter From The Editor

From My Texas Daughter-In-Law (where I will be for Thanksgiving)

Only a Southerner knows the difference between a hissie fit and a conniption fit, and that you don't "HAVE" them, you "PITCH" them.

Only a Southerner can show or point out to you the general direction of "yonder."

Only a Southerner knows exactly how long "directly" is — as in: "Going to town, be back directly."

Even Southern babies know that "Gimme some sugar" is not a request for the white, granular sweet substance that sits in a pretty little bowl in the middle of the table.

No true Southerner would ever assume that the car with the flashing turn signal is actually going to make a turn.

Southerners never refer to one person as "ya'll."

And a true Southerner knows you don't scream obscenities at little old ladies who drive 30 MPH on the freeway. You just say, "Bless her heart" and go your own way.

And for those that are not from the South but have lived here for a long time, ya'll need a sign to hang on ya'lls front porch that reads "I aint from the South but I got here as fast as I could."

Bless your hearts, ya'll have a blessed day.   Bill

BOARD MEETING 10/9/05
Warner Mach

Board Members Present

President Gary Denise, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Chester Blechinger, Acting Secretary Warner Mach, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Publications Committee Chairman Bill Agnew, and Members at Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also member Thomas McNorton. The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

Old Business

Warner Mach requested reimbursement of $19.24 for refreshment purchases for two months. The motion to reimburse was voted on and passed.

Chester Blechinger gave the treasurer's report: There was $225 taken in during the past month and $87.41 paid out, for a net of $137.69. The balance stands at $6,547.73. There are 77 members and 87 on the mailing list.

Tom McNorton discussed the proposed move from Oakland University to Arvin Meritor. He indicated that the company has their own computer group that meets the second Wednesday of every month. There is a possibility that they might want to merge with SEMCO.

Tom McNorton indicated, further, that the company is definitely interested in hosting SEMCO and that having repeat meetings (meetings every month) should not be a problem.

Bill Agnew reported on his discussion with Oakland University. He noted that we could continue to meet at Oakland for at least one more year. The cost would continue to be $600 a year.

At Oakland we will need a password, within the next couple of months, to get on the Internet. The Dean of Engineering and Computer Science has agreed to pay our Internet fee.

Bill Agnew also noted that they would like to see a representative of the university at SEMCO meetings, possibly a graduate student.

Warner Mach proposed that the board should, in advance, agree to commit to the Arvin Meritor move if there is a firm agreement before the next DATA BUS deadline. Chester Blechinger seconded the proposal. However, after some discussion, the proposal was withdrawn.

18

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

Nov. 13: Adobe Photoshop Elements, Photoshop CS2, and Premiere Elements: Terry White from Adobe Systems will demonstrate and discuss Adobe Photoshop Elements, a powerful but easy to use image editing program; Photoshop CS2, the professional image editing standard and leader of the Photoshop digital imaging line; and Premiere Elements, which makes it easy to edit and produce videos at home. Terry is a great presenter. He is also the founder and leader of MacGroup Detroit.

New Business
There was discussion about how to increase membership and the possible connection between membership and the proposed move.

Tom Callow moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Bob Clyne, and the meeting was adjourned.

October Meeting Attendance: 31

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Tom Callow
Interim Chairman

Nov. 13: Adobe Photoshop Elements, Photoshop CS2, and Premiere Elements Continued: Continuation of the topics started in the SIG-IBM meeting.

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.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

Nov. 13: Help And Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience. No question is too simple!!

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

Dec. 5: (first Monday), 6:45 pm, at the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. **Topic: Wide ranging discussion of computers and computing.**

December 2005 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., Nov. 20, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <agnew@bignet.net>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. 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)
Nov. 26–Saturday, 10am (4th Saturday); W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd., 1 mile west of Orchard Lk Rd. Jack Lockman at <thunder@tir.com   or 313-341-8855.

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)
Dec. 7–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <http://www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: Christmas Party (Location to be announced).

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

DPUG (Detroit Palm Users Group)
Nov. 10–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)
Nov. 8–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817 (enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn/FACE/index.html>.

MacGroup Detroit
Nov. 20–Sunday (3rd Sunday), 3pm–5pm; Birmingham Temple, 28611 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: Creating Databases with FileMaker Pro.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
Nov. 19–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
Nov. 10–(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)
Dec. 6–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>. Topic: What's Hot for the Holidays, by John Jordan from CompUSA.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
Nov. 12–Saturday, 12:30–2:30pm, (2nd Saturday); Location to be announced; Web: <http://www.mdlug.org>. Info: Richard Jackson 248-546-3694.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group
Nov. 12–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.

**OCTOBER
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Betty MacKenzie
Gary DeNise

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

SEMCO CALENDAR—October/November
ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

November 13–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.**

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 pm, **Room 235. Program: Adobe Photoshop Elements, Photoshop CS2, and Premiere Elements:** Terry White from Adobe Systems will demonstrate and discuss Adobe Photoshop Elements, a powerful but easy to use image editing program; Photoshop CS2, the professional image editing standard and leader of the Photoshop digital imaging line; and Premiere Elements, which makes it easy to edit and produce videos at home. Terry is a great presenter. He is also the founder and leader of MacGroup Detroit.

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: Adobe Photoshop Elements, Photoshop CS2, and Premiere Elements Continued:** Continuation of the topics started in the SIG-IBM meeting.

SIG-ADVANCED, **December 5–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; library is west of Coolidge. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.**

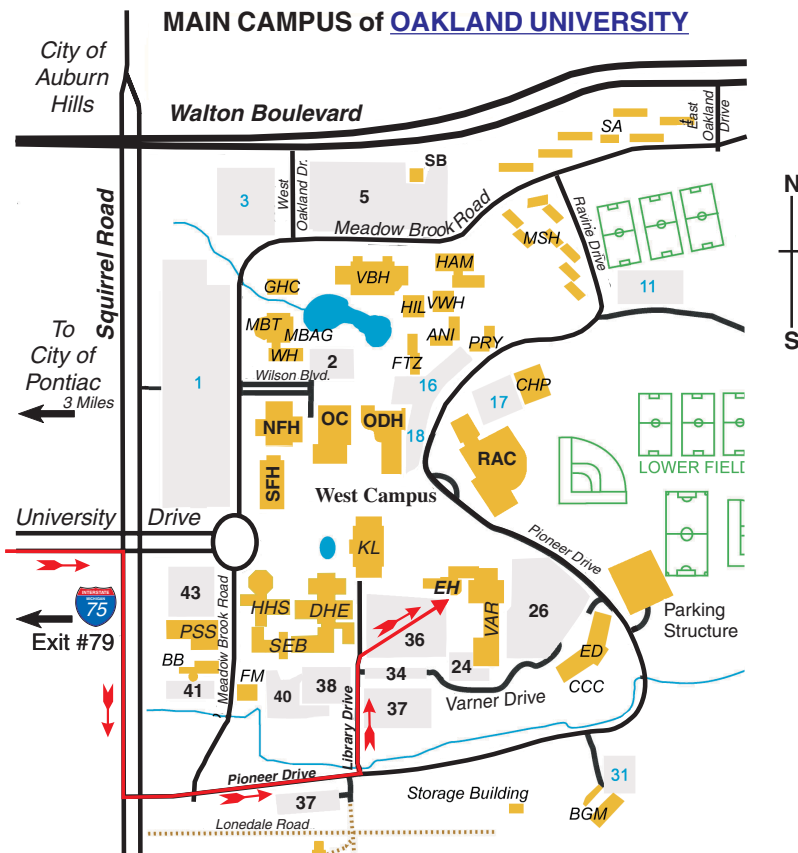**December 11–SUNDAY: SEMCO**, 1:30 pm. Topic to be announced.

January 8–SUNDAY: 1:30 pm. Patrick Steele, Microsoft.NET MVP, will present an "Intoduction to Visual Basic Programming."

http://www.semco.org
PUBLIC INVITED
(Please copy this and the next page to post on your bulletin board)

MAIN CAMPUS of OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

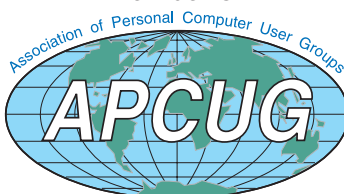**MAP LEGEND**
EH   Elliott Hall
VAR Varner Hall
DHE Dodge Hall of Engineering
KL   Kresge Library

DIRECTIONS
Driving north on I-75 (from Detroit and suburbs), take Exit 79 (University Drive); stay to the right on University Drive to campus entrance. Turn right (south) on Squirrel Road (at traffic light that is just outside campus); turn left on Pioneer Drive (next street to left). Turn left off Pioneer Drive onto Library Drive (second left) toward Kresge Library. When you get to parking lot 36, proceed to the far (northeast) corner of the parking lot. After parking, go into the nearest entrance. Follow the "SEMCO" signs.

Member of

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

Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
   November 13
   December 11

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