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**SouthEastern Michigan**  
**Computer Organization, Inc.**

**DATA BUS**

**BALLOT AND  
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**IN THIS ISSUE**

<b>MEETINGS SCHEDULE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SEMCO HAS A NEW HOME .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Deals Column, by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Digital Cameras Blossom As Popularity Increases, by Ira Wilsker .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Where Did All Those Photos Go? File Management, by Jack Wilfore .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>I'm Not Going To Pay A Lot For Office Software, by Ira Wilsker .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Tech Books For Non-Dummies, by Gabe Goldberg .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Ram &amp; Reason: A Virus And Incident Checklist, by Rob Rice .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Add A New Dimension To Your Browsing, by Gabe Goldberg .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The New, The Best, And The Worst, by Pim Borman .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Managing The Information Flood, by Gene Barlow .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Informative Tech News, by Bob Elgines .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Simple Password Practices Keep PC And Online Data Secure, by Gabe Goldberg .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Tid Bits, by Gregory West .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Letter From The Editor .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Board Meeting Minutes, by Carol Sanzi .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>General Meeting &amp; SIG-IBM Meeting Minutes, by Carol Sanzi .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>SIGs: IBM, IBM Intermediate, Advanced, &amp; Novice IBM Group .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Free Programming Languages From Microsoft, by Richard Jackson .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>DATA BUS Deadline .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Other Groups Calendar .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Special Member Benefits .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Computer Resource People .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>SEMCO CALENDAR OF EVENTS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>MAP, ArvinMeritor Building, Troy .....</b>	<b>35</b>

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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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## **SEMCO MEETINGS** **Sunday,** **January 8, 2006**

<b>Board Meeting</b>	<b>12:00pm</b>
<b>General Meeting</b>	<b>1:30pm</b>
<b>SIG-IBM Meeting</b>	<b>1:45pm</b>
<b>Social Period</b>	<b>3:15pm</b>
<b>IBM Novice Group</b>	<b>3:45pm</b>
<b>SIG-IBM Intermediate</b>	<b>3:45pm</b>

## **SEMCO HAS A NEW HOME**

Starting with the January meeting, SEMCO will be meeting at the ArvinMeritor Building, 2135 West Maple Road, Troy (See the map on page 35). The building is on Maple Road (15 Mile Rd.) between Crooks Rd. and Coolidge Hwy. on the southwest corner of Maple Road and Mapelawn Dr. across from the Troy Motor Mall.

Our thanks go to SEMCO member Tom McNorton for suggesting the facility and to ArvinMeritor, Bill Edwards and Jerry Shanek of ArvinMeritor, and Tom McNorton for facilitating our use of the site.



## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION**

The annual meeting of the members of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. will be held Sunday, January 8, 2005 at 1:30 pm at the ArvinMeritor Building, 2135 West Maple Rd., Troy, Michigan.

The election of Officers and Members at Large of the Board of Directors of the Corporation will take place at the annual meeting.



ArvinMeritor Site



The Michigan Room  
at ArvinMeritor



## DEALS COLUMN

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

I can't emphasize enough the value of users group help, and here is an example: Recently, while preparing to drive over to our beach condo, I wanted to copy a floppy disk containing some important files not backed up. When I attempted to copy it, the process stopped in the middle, telling me my second disk was corrupted. I tried to stop the process so I could use another disk, but couldn't get the procedure to go away. Even when I killed Windows Explorer, then restarted it, and was ready with a new disk, it tried unsuccessfully to resume the process. Finally, I decided to reboot the computer in an effort to clear it, and when it tried to restart, all I got was the opening Intel screen and nothing more. After forcing the machine to shut down, and a brief pause, I tried to start the computer again, and it would not go past the startup Intel screen.

Horror set in, and I wondered what I might have done to screw it up, and what to do next. I was lost! All of a sudden I remembered something I had read only a couple days before in a users group newsletter while browsing a write-up about their Q & A session. A member reported that he could not get his computer to boot and finally removed a USB Flash Drive he had been using before he shut it off. It booted up just fine with the flash drive removed. Since I was using a USB Flash Drive while trying a new backup program, I removed it, tried to boot again, and was very relieved when the computer booted normally. I am running Windows XP Professional.

I can't remember which newsletter I read that in, but my thanks to the user group community and the newsletters I receive from them. I read them from cover to cover, especially about their Q & A sessions, and sometimes find good information that I think my readers might use. It was interesting that when I tried rebooting again with a 256 Meg USB Flash Drive plugged in; it booted just fine, but would not boot with the one gig USB drive plugged in. I would never have thought to remove that flash drive, so I hope my experience was useful to my readers.

### Problems in Dell Land

I read in Ed Foster's Gripe Line about a company that had bought almost 200 Dell Optiplex GX270 PCs, and when a known defect arose concerning a capacitor on the motherboard that tended to swell and cause problems, it should have been covered by their support contract, but Dell didn't live up to their agreement. They started to replace them, but after more problem boards were found, they stopped and instead eventually wanted the company to trade them in. For financial reasons the customer didn't want to do that, and any negotiations finally stopped. It was known that some larger companies with the same problem had gotten it resolved, but nobody knows why. Up until now, I had thought Dell had a good name in the industry, and I don't know the outcome. Ed Foster's Gripe Line URL is <<http://www.gripe2ed.com>>, but I couldn't find this story posted at this writing, maybe because I read it in an August issue. You need to set up a password to access the Gripe Line Web site. For more about the problem, check <<http://www.dslreports.com/forum/remark.13709831>>.

## Trade Shows

For the folks who ask me about the trade shows, we recently worked the National Safety Council Show <<http://www.safety2005.org>> that was very interesting. It used about 500,000 square feet of exhibit space and had over 20,000 attendees from around the globe. You wouldn't think so, but I saw some cutting-edge technology featured there. Like many trade shows here, they had an evening party for attendees at Universal Studios.

We also worked the interesting Bank Administration Industry show. <<http://www.bai.org>>. You would have easily recognized many names exhibiting there, which included well known ATM machines, security names, and software companies like Microsoft, Adobe, Oracle USA, and many others well known to users group people. The exhibit area was about 400,000 sq. ft. Free food for the attendees too. Attendance was about 12,000. Central Florida is a hotbed of trade show activity, but we only work a few of them.

## Still Good

Don't forget, the deal is still good for the WebBuild Express software for creating your Web site. To download it at <<http://store.esellerate.net/nfti/store>>, use the coupon code CPN8348901136, when it calls for it, to receive your 25% discount. I have a trial version, but I have not tried it out yet. Between health problems and laziness, I don't have much for you this month, but I hope you took advantage of the APCUG announcements for deals.

## The Lost Can Often Be Found

Have you ever deleted a file and later found you should not have done that? No problem, just go to the Recycle Bin and get it back. Come to find out though,

it has been dumped by the Recycle Bin. Now you have another problem; but not if you have PC Inspector, which can do unbelievable things when it comes to recovering deleted files from your hard drive. Your hard drive has to be working properly for it to work.

Best of all, PC Inspector is Freeware, and it can be downloaded at <[http://www.pcinspector.de/file\\_recovery/uK/welcome.htm](http://www.pcinspector.de/file_recovery/uK/welcome.htm)>. If you have used Secure Clean or Wipe Drive, forget about it. I found this information in a UG newsletter, but have not tried it personally.

## Announcement For NeoDownloader (Edited to shorten)

"We offer a special. User group people get a 25% discount on the new version of NeoDownloader by e-mail request..

"September 27, 2005.

"Neowise Software, the leading developer of task automation tools, announces the newest major version of their NeoDownloader. This powerful multithreaded tool for automatic downloading of pictures, audio, and video files now features the unique Web Spider technology that guarantees a fast and steady download for both high and low bandwidth. With its improved interface, new image viewer, and media player, NeoDownloader expands the horizons of your web experience by improving your Internet browsing habits.

"Each download job you trust to NeoDownloader starts with a profile where you can set file types, size limits, resolution, and scanning depth. The program scans the site of your interest and picks out only the files that match your profile. The download is fully automated, but you can control it through the download progress window

and fine-tune its performance. The download can run simultaneously with scanning, or after full scanning of the site is completed. Downloaded files become instantly available in the image preview zone of the program window.

"The new version includes a collection of project templates and sample projects to get started fast. The built-in image viewer and media player provide instant access to downloaded files. A Drop basket and a set of hotkeys help you to launch a project from any application. The download library replicates source sites and organizes files in an easy-to-use way. The password list secures automatic login to password-protected websites.

"NeoDownloader v2.0 Features:

- Downloads pictures, audio and video that match user preferences.
- Filters for file type, size, resolution, and URL keywords.
- Settings for the scanning depth for internal and external links.
- Up to 10 simultaneous connections.
- Support for password protected sites.
- New project profile settings.
- Drop basket facility to download from other applications.
- Built-in image viewer, featuring slideshow and wallpaper setting support.
- Built-in media player.

"NeoDownloader runs under Windows 98, NT 4.0, Me, 2000, and XP platforms and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Free lifetime technical support and minor upgrades are extended to all registered users. A fully functional evaluation version is available as a free download at: <http://www.neowise.com/ftp/NeoDownloaderSetup.exe>.

"Company Website is <http://www.neowise.com>.

"Product page link: <http://www.neowise.com/neodownloader/>.

E-mail: [alexey@neowise.com](mailto:alexey@neowise.com).

Best regards,

Alexey Surkis

CEO of Neowise Software"

*That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month, if your editor permits. Be sure to check the new announcement pages on my Web site. 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 Cheap skate) Click [bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com). Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.*

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## Digital Cameras Blossom as Popularity Increases

### By Ira Wilsker

Much to no one's surprise, the popularity of digital cameras is exploding, as the quality improves even more and the cameras become more affordable. Digital photography, which was initially slow, grainy, and sometimes difficult to manipulate, has matured, and is now nearly universal. With the dramatic improvements in digital camera and storage technology in recent years, much of what early adopters of digital photography experienced has changed for the better.

Sitting in front of me as I type this column are two digital cameras, each of which is representative of the respective technology of the day. One



of the cameras is a JVC GC-S1U, which is about 5 years old, and when it was new it was considered a technological marvel and state of the art in its day, but by today's standards, while still functional, it is technologically obsolete. One of the first digital still cameras available, it has a 0.3 megapixel image of 640x480 pixels, which is miniscule by today's standards. It takes 4 AA batteries, which are good for only a few dozen photos before they are exhausted, even less if the integral flash is used. Reviews of the day used the expression that this camera "eats batteries." One of the first cameras on the market to take a memory card, it uses the now large format by current standards CF or Compact Flash card for additional photo storage. Connecting to the computer via a very slow serial connection made photos slow to download, unless an external card reader was used to read the CF card. One feature that this antique camera has, that is still impressive by today's standards, is a 10x optical zoom. The processor in the camera is horribly slow by today's standards, with a noticeable lag between pressing the shutter and capturing the image, along with a long delay for a follow up snapshot.

The newer digital cameras on the market clearly show the technological improvements that have become commonplace. New digital cameras come in a wide assortment of prices and features, from tiny key-chain size cameras, to cameras embedded in a ballpoint pen, to inexpensive disposable cameras, to pocket size marvels, to SLR (Single Lens Reflex) type cameras with extreme resolution rivaling 35mm film, and using an assortment of available lenses, just like traditional 35mm

cameras. Zoom can range from the less expensive and generally inferior digital zoom, to the superior optical zoom. Zoom ranges typically are from 3x to 12x, with some models offering a combination of optical and digital zoom to increase the ability to manipulate the closeness of the image. Many of the newer digital still cameras can also capture video and sound, often in the popular MPEG-4 30fps (30 frames per second) format, the length of the video being only limited by the amount of storage available on the memory card.

The second camera I have in front of me is a new, state of the art Casio EX-S500, one of a series of new cameras Casio is producing in the "Exilim" series. The camera is actually small compared to my older camera, only being about 3.5 inches wide by about 2.3 inches tall, and about 0.6 of an inch thick, weighing only about 4 ounces. This full featured camera will easily fit in a shirt pocket or purse. It uses the tiny SD memory cards. With an excellent 5 megapixel maximum image size, this camera will take digital photos in six different sizes ranging from an enormous 2560x1920 pixel size (5 megapixels), to the smaller 640x480 size (3/10 of a megapixel). It should be noted that the smaller the image, the more images that can be stored in the memory card. Also, the smaller images are more appropriate if they are going to be e-mailed, an important consideration in "netiquette." The larger size images are appropriate if large photos are to be printed in 8x10 inch or 11x14 inch sizes, or even larger.

Zoom is provided by a telescoping 3x optical zoom, which can be coupled with an integral 4x digital zoom, giving a maximum zoom of 12x. The lens

produced very bright and sharp images. When the camera is turned off, the telescoping zoom lens is retracted into the body of the camera, making the front of the camera nearly flat. One technological marvel built into this camera is an “Anti-Shake DSP,” which is a digital signal processor that removes the effect of moving the camera while the image is being recorded; this contributes to an exceptionally sharp image by removing or minimizing the blurring many of us encounter when we move the camera as we take a photo.

Despite the small size of the camera, it also can record movies and sound in three formats, 640x480 in both high quality and normal mode, and a smaller image 320x240 size for extended play. Video is saved in MPEG-4 format, and the sound is saved in the universal WAV format. With a common and inexpensive 256 megabyte memory card, the camera can capture about 8 minutes of video and sound at the high quality setting, and about 45 minutes at the extended play setting. Simply, available memory and battery power is the limiting factor in the length of the video that can be shot at any given time.

While my old camera ate batteries, having a very short battery life, this new Casio Exilim has a proprietary rechargeable lithium ion battery with a normal capacity of about 200 photos before it needs to be recharged.

The camera has a shutter speed of 1/8 to 1/2000 of a second, rivaling many of the classical 35mm cameras, and includes a multi-mode flash, self timer, bright 2.2 inch LCD screen, and a mini-cradle which simultaneously connects the camera to a USB 2 high speed connection as well as AC power to

charge the internal battery. There is also an “AV Out” jack on the cradle. Included with the camera are two CDs of software to download and manage the still images as well as the video. A set of included video cables allows the playing of video direct from the camera when it is docked in the cradle.

The body of the Casio Exilim EX-S500 camera is stainless steel, and available in a typical steel grey color, as well as orange-toned stainless steel. This camera has a suggested retail price of \$350. Locally these cameras are available at Circuit City, CompUSA, Radio Shack, Target, Ritz Camera, Sharper Image, or online from Casio at [www.casio.com](http://www.casio.com).

Casio is now marketing some excellent quality digital cameras, and should be strongly considered when shopping for better quality and full featured digital cameras.

*Ira Wilsker is an APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; and a radio & TV show host.*

*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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## **Where Did All Those Photos Go? File Management By Jack Wilfore**

Do you find that when photos get transferred from your camera to the computer, you feel you have lost



control? For now, let's see if we can't gain back just a little of that control.

When photos transfer from your camera to your computer, it's really important for you to know exactly where they go and where they get "filed." There is nothing more frustrating than having your photos or other images or documents, or letters or scans, get filed in your computer, and then you can't find them later.

### **File Management**

This brings us to the subject of this article, "File Management." Let's begin with the thought that your computer is nothing more than a big filing cabinet. Now it's up to you to decide where and how to organize your "files" on your computer, just as it is with the file cabinet in your office.

### **Disk Drives**

Before we get to actually managing your files, a brief review of how your computer stores data. Computers store data on "drives." Some drives are inside the computer, and some may be outside or external to the computer. You probably already know that the "C" drive is a big storehouse for what's inside the computer. It is the heart and soul of your computer, and when you have a disk crash, it's usually your "C" drive that goes, and you are out of business. Other drives may include an "A" drive for use of a floppy disk, and a "D" drive, designated as CD-ROM drive, which is for your CD's. Other external drives, also get assigned letter designations, and could include removable or external drives such as zip drives, or memory cards, or docking stations, or cameras, etc. If you left click on the "My Computer" icon on your desktop, you can see these disk drives. You can also view what's on

each drive by using your left mouse button to double-click on the A, C, or D drive icon.

There is one very important icon I want to point out, when you are looking at "Windows." The top bar (usually blue) across the top of a window is the Title Bar, the next bar down on the above window is a Menu Bar, and the third bar down is the Task Bar. On the Task Bar is one very important icon, the UP ONE LEVEL icon, which usually looks like a folder with an up arrow. Get familiar with and use this icon to move around within your "drives," or file cabinet.

Try it! If you left mouse click that UP ONE LEVEL icon, the next window you see is the Desktop. Within the Desktop window, you can see the "My Documents" folder, which is the cornerstone of the file management structure.

### **Files, Folders, And The File Cabinet**

I like to think of drives as file cabinets. They store electronic items such as documents, photos, images, spreadsheets, programs, etc. Drives may have individual files on them (which is usually not a very good idea), and folders, which usually contain a collection of files on a particular topic or a particular use.

Recall that the "C" drive stores many files. Now as these files come in, we just can't let them go anywhere; this is where we can actually put them into an appropriate folder of our choice. And this is how you will get your file cabinet organized.

Let's review two key items:

Folders provide that organizational structure to a disk drive, just as they do in a file cabinet. First, you will put labeled folders into your cabinet/driver.

Each folder will have a name. When you view the contents of a disk drive, folders are normally listed in alphabetical order. New folders can be created by right clicking on your desktop, and selecting New>Folder. The new folder appears on your desktop with the blue title, where you can now type the name you have selected for that folder. These folders can now be dragged and dropped, wherever you want them.

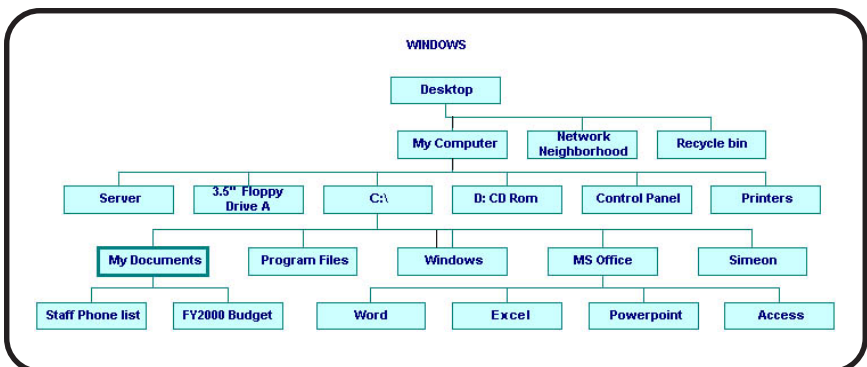
Files can and usually are put inside folders. This is where you will put your documents, your photos, etc. In order to be able to find your documents later within an overstuffed folder, you give each document a unique name. On a PC, it is wise to use the following naming conventions for both folders and files: A file name is made up of two parts: (1) the name of the document and (2) the file extension, which is usually assigned by the computer. If you don't see the file extensions in Windows XP, go to Desktop>Tools>Folder Options>View Tab, and then unclick "Hide extensions for known file types." You may name a file anything you wish (with some punctuation limitations), but it is preferable to name a file something you

are likely to remember later. It is safer if file names are no longer than 8 characters whenever possible. Although Windows (and Mac) allow longer file names, you may get in problems while transferring files to other computers if you use longer file names. Also, use only letters and numbers in your file names. Special characters like "\", "/", "\*", or "?" must be avoided in the file name. The second part of a file name is the extension. In the file "text.doc," the word text is the file name, and the .doc is the extension, identifying this as a Word document. A period always separates the two. The extension identifies what kind of a document you have. Some examples of file extensions are:

- .txt : plain text
- .doc : Microsoft Word Document
- .htm or .html : Web document
- .gif , .jpg , .bmp , .tif , : images
- .ppt : PowerPoint Presentation

## The Structure

The File Management structure has a tree type organization, or is "hierarchical." And, you have the ability to set up that structure just as you would with the file cabinet in your office. Shown below is a graphic of one such structure.



Clicking Start > Programs > Accessories > Windows Explorer is one way of looking at the internal file structure of your computer. Windows Explorer shows many parent folders, also known as directories, with sub-directories (or sub-folders), and then files expanding beneath them.

Clicking the plus sign beside My Documents expands the files and additional sub-directories inside, or beneath My Documents.

Clicking the minus sign collapses the sub-directories and files.

To clarify how this new knowledge can help, when photos are transferred to your computer, whatever the transfer method might be, somewhere you will be asked to decide "Where do you want these photos to go?" Sometimes the program will want to put your photos in either 1) a folder it creates, sometimes named with today's date, or 2) into a folder which already exists perhaps as part of your camera software. If this is your preference, make note of both the folder name and its location or path. Sometimes the program will ask you where you want them, and then you can browse and select the destination folder of your choice. In my case, I created a special folder called "From Camera" and located that folder in My Pictures, which is in My Documents, which is on my Desktop. Every time I do a photo transfer, I make sure the pictures are going to the "From Camera" folder. I can decide later which photos to keep and where I want to store the "keepers." Either way, you should now be able to sketch out on a piece of paper, ahead of time, exactly where your photos are going, which was the objective of this article.

More information on the subject of "File Management" is readily available

on the Internet, especially from academic sources. Some of the material for this article has been extracted and credit is due these four excellent references:

Furman University's File Management or Where Did It Go?

[<http://facweb.furman.edu/~pecoy/mfl195/tutorial/>](http://facweb.furman.edu/~pecoy/mfl195/tutorial/).

Duke University's Window's Explorer: Managing Your Files

[<http://www.duke.edu/~dhewitt/tutorials/explorer/explor.html>](http://www.duke.edu/~dhewitt/tutorials/explorer/explor.html).

University of Virginia File Management

[<http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/docs/fms/pc/structure.html#hierarchy>](http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/docs/fms/pc/structure.html#hierarchy).

*Jack Wilfore is a member of the Hilton Head Island Computer Club, South Carolina. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please feel free to send Jack an e-mail at [<jwilfore@hargray.com>](mailto:jjwilfore@hargray.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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## Vegetable

A man and his wife were sitting in the living room and he said to her, "Just so you know, I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug." His wife got up, unplugged the TV and threw out all of his beer.

# **I'm Not Going to Pay a Lot for Office Software**

**By Ira Wilsker**

Microsoft and others move over; another giant killer is coming to town. The "open source" movement is now gaining wider acceptance and challenging your dominance and high prices by providing competitive software, either for free or a nominal charge. "Open source" means that the programming code is available such that anyone can access the code and write new software and accessories to supplement the original code. Open source is not new, and there is much software available, but it is only fairly recently that the open source movement has made it to the main stream, and is no longer only of interest to geeks and nerds. As name-brand software often remains expensive, in some cases prohibitively expensive, free and inexpensive open source programs start to appear more attractive. Open source is a maturing area, improving rapidly, such that in terms of quality and features, open source software is now seriously rivaling the commercial leaders.

Open source code is being used for the popular operating system Linux, and the free and very popular Firefox browser (<[www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org)>) now competing with Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Firefox has an open source companion product, Thunderbird, which is a very capable competitor to Microsoft's Outlook, also available for free download from the Mozilla Web site.

Open source software may become even more mainstream as the newly released "OpenOffice" version 2.0 becomes widely used, and continues to

battle head to head with Microsoft Office. While lacking some of the polish of Microsoft Office, OpenOffice is available for free download from <[www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)>, and is available in formats that will run on Windows, Mac OS X (X11), GNU/Linux, and Sun Solaris. OpenOffice is also currently available in 36 languages, which obviously has international appeal. For those unwilling to download the large files necessary to install OpenOffice (up to 90 Megs, depending on version), it is also available on CDs for a nominal fee; I found OpenOffice 2.0 listed on Amazon for about \$14 with free shipping. In the spirit of open source, almost anyone can apply to distribute OpenOffice on CD, which will obviously enhance the distribution of the software. For those concerned about the legalities of the software in terms of licenses and intellectual property rights, the OpenOffice.org Web site says, "... you may download OpenOffice.org Version 2.0 completely free of any licence (sic) fees, use it for any purpose—private, educational, government and public administration, commercial—and pass on copies free of charge to family, friends, students, employees, etc."

The newly released OpenOffice version 2.0 is intended to be a comprehensive suite of office products that will appeal to home users, businesses, and educational institutions who desire a full-featured and compatible suite of office products that can read and write files in most of the popular formats. Current users of office suites will find it quite easy to use OpenOffice 2.0, as the menus, appearance, and commands are very similar to those used in Microsoft Office, Corel WordPerfect Suite, Lotus

SmartSuite, and other comprehensive office products, with a near-zero learning curve to use OpenOffice. To insure compatibility with most existing data formats as well as future formats, OpenOffice implements the new international standard “OASIS” format. According to the [OpenOffice.org](http://OpenOffice.org) Web site, this standardized format, which will also be incorporated in the upcoming Microsoft Office 12, is referred to as “OpenDocument.” “OpenDocument is a genuine vendor-neutral, open-standard specification free from intellectual property encumbrances. All developers are free to work with it.” For those already using a word processor, database, spread sheet, or other office software, OpenOffice 2.0 can read and write almost all data formats, including MS Word “Doc.”

OpenOffice 2.0 is full-featured, including a word processor “Writer,” the “Calc” spreadsheet, “Impress” presentation utility, “Draw” graphic utility, and the “Base” database program.

“Writer” has all of the features a user will expect in a comprehensive word processor, including “... embedded illustrations, cross-references, tables of contents, indexes, bibliographies... Auto-complete, auto-format, and real-time spelling check ...” Personally, I have three other suites on my computer (Microsoft, Corel, and Lotus), and found Writer to be every bit as easy to use as the commercial competitors, and could not find any meaningful features that were missing from Writer.

The spreadsheet “Calc” is a complete spreadsheet offering dozens of integral formulas, two- and three-dimensional graphics, database sort

functions, automated charts of several variations, statistical analysis, and other intelligent features. One thing I especially like about Calc is the “Natural Language” function, where simple terms (such as “sales”) may be used in the formulas, instead of the more traditional cell address (such as “D6”), which can still be used when needed. For those who have used other spreadsheets, Calc can import and write data in most of those formats, including the Microsoft Excel format.

Impress is a first-class presentation manager, easily capable of preparing professional appearing presentations. In addition to the traditional presentation features available on the competing products, Impress also offers animations and other slide show features, as well as the ability to create 3-D images. Impress can also read and write Microsoft’s PowerPoint format, allowing easy importing and exporting of files. Presentations created in Impress can also be saved as Flash (.swf) presentations, viewable on almost any browser, complete with animations and sound.

Draw is a powerful graphics package allowing for simple or complex graphics to be easily created and edited. Draw can read and write most popular graphics formats, including BMP, GIF, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, and WMF. Images created can also be animated and saved in the Flash (.swf) format.

Base is the database utility integrated with OpenOffice. Databases can be created or maintained using wizards, design views, or SQL views, and offers options for users at all levels from novice to expert. In terms of compatibility, according to [OpenOffice.org](http://OpenOffice.org), “BASE supports many

popular databases natively (Adabas D, ADO, Microsoft Access, MySQL), or any database through industry-standard ODBC and JDBC drivers. It also supports any LDAP compliant address book, as well as common formats such as Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Windows, and Mozilla.”

One feature that I found particularly impressive with the entire suite is the ability to create industry standard PDF files as a print option available within each program, without the need to have an exterior PDF utility. Since PDF is universally accepted as a readable format, this feature enhances the attractiveness of OpenOffice.

Since it is available as a free (but large) download, and inexpensively on CD, and can be distributed freely without traditional license restrictions, OpenOffice is an excellent alternative to the pricey commercial competitors. I strongly suggest that OpenOffice be obtained, and tried. If budgets are tight, such as often experienced by students, small businesses, and non-profit agencies, OpenOffice may be an ideal solution.

Websites:

<<http://www.openoffice.org>>

<<http://www.mozilla.org>>

Listing and samples for all components:

<<http://www.openoffice.org/screenshots/ooo20/index.html>>.

Write Word processor: <<http://www.openoffice.org/screenshots/ooo20/writer/index.html>>.

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***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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## **Tech Books for Non-Dummies**

**By Gabe Goldberg**

If you are seeking techno-gift ideas for family, friends, and yourself, a trusted guidebook is valuable. So it's a luxury to have three such references from which to get great gift ideas, or to develop your own wish list.

These guidebooks would be Sandy Berger's *Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology*, *Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos*, and *Great Age Guide to the Internet*. Each book offers an open and uncluttered design, amply illustrated with easy-to-read screen images and photos, and clearly written in an engaging style that builds confidence in the reader.

Sandy shares her sense of excitement and discovery with the reader, offering clear opinions on technology and how it affects us. Nothing is dumbed down—there's no mention of dummies or idiots—which is pleasantly different from many technology books. And whether you agree or disagree on individual items, you'll certainly know where Sandy stands.

The “Great Age” title is credited to Pablo Picasso, who said “Age only matters when one is aging. Now that I have arrived at a great age, I might as well be twenty.” Chapters begin with other thought-provoking quotations. My



favorite, highlighting the empowering nature of the books' subject matter, comes from marketing guru Greg Arnold, who said that "All greatness is achieved while performing outside your comfort zone." Although these books aren't uncomfortable reading, they may challenge you to try new things.

Each book opens onto Contents at a Glance, a list of chapter titles and page numbers which offers a handy, quick review of its content, and a brief "What's Inside" write-up. The Technology and Internet books include valuable sidebars calling out Sandy's Tips, Blooper Alerts, Lingo, and Trivia. Selected items in Gadgets and Gizmos are designated as Sandy's Favorites.

Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology reminds us how pervasive technology is, how much things have changed in our lifetimes, and how change is accelerating and never-ending. It addresses how technology has affected shopping, travel, health, finances, and even meeting people, and how families can take advantage of the digital world. Throughout, it encourages continued learning at any age and illustrates just how much there is that's worth learning. For example, it lists diverse search engines, giving attributes and advantages for each. Many are specialized and lesser known than Google or Yahoo, but may be better for fulfilling certain information quests, such as the Library of Congress, available to all online.

The Great Age Guide to the Internet focuses on getting online and learning the language of the Internet, but also to have fun while avoiding problems. The book starts gently, introducing Internet concepts and terms, and assembles them

into tips and tricks for Web searching, e-mailing, understanding Web advertising, and even building your own Web pages. It gives tips for picking an ISP (Internet service provider), demystifies browser windows components, and offers netiquette advice for instant messaging.

The Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos is a different sort of book. It serves as a catalog, shopping guide, and tour guide through current and future technology, offering gift ideas for oneself or Santa. It's not Consumer Reports, since it doesn't compare choices head-to-head, but its interesting and opinionated narrative provides both good and bad news about products. Its general advice and principles regarding technology keep it from becoming outdated as fast as a simple products list.

All three books are complementary, an easy read cover-to-cover, or useful as references for specific topics, services, and products. Their indexes locate topics quickly, and, although there's some necessary overlap of content, each provides different information with varying orientation and emphasis. Overall, the books deliver usable information about evolving technology areas.

Specifications for the books are as follows:

Title: **Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology.**

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 288 pages

ISBN: 0789734400

Title: **Great Age Guide to the Internet.**

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 288 pages

ISBN: 0789734427

**Title: Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos.**

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 264 pages

ISBN: 0789734419

All three books are published by Que, are priced at \$19.99, and can be purchased from Barnes & Noble

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## **Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist**

**By Rob Rice**

Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it, and then another, and then another pops up, so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all, as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus,

and the program needs to scan your system so that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:

1. Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!

2. Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.

3. Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that were running at the time the infection occurred.

4. Mark the computer "Do Not Use."

5. Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.

### **Step One**

Do not turn off your computer. Not every trojan and virus is the same, so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage, more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For

example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, “to allow the changes to take effect.” In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take effect.

### **Step Two**

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware, and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personal information from going out, and prevents other machines from being infected. Many checklists have this action rated number one, and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

### **Step Three**

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that were running at the time the infection occurred. This is important not only for repairing the system, but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

### **Step Four**

Mark the computer “Do Not Use.” This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

### **Step Five**

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

It’s possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software, then let it do what it wants to do, and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs, then DO NOT RUN THE SOFTWARE!

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software, and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished, so be careful!

*Rob Rice is a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, and a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at <[articles@isp.com](mailto:articles@isp.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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## **Add a New Dimension To Your Browsing By Gabe Goldberg**

It’s hard to imagine a different world. A great early science fiction book Flatland <[www.eldritchpress.org/ea/FL.HTM](http://www.eldritchpress.org/ea/FL.HTM)> describes life in a two-dimensional world, with creatures unable to imagine the third dimension

that we take for granted. And the “string theory” of modern physics [<www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/>](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/) speculates that our world really has eleven dimensions.

While I can’t imagine those extra dimensions, we spend time in a two-dimensional world every day—it’s how most people browse the Web. But even that has changed, as browsers have evolved from displaying one site per window to more flexible tabbed browsing, displaying many Web pages in a single window.

So now it’s interesting and fun to take three-dimensional browsing out for a cruise, surfing the Internet, courtesy of Browse3D. This visual-browsing style lets you see forward and backward, where you’ve been and where you’re going. It’s great for browsing that involves a lot of forward-and-backward navigation, or that requires following many Web links.

When first started, Browse3D offers abundant helpful tips for use. These can be scrolled all at once or browsed each time the program runs. And built-in Help provides a comprehensive tutorial, highlighting features and capabilities.

This tool wraps around Internet Explorer—the vendor calls it a “reverse plug-in”—to display Web pages on multiple walls, shown three dimensionally on our two-dimensional monitors. The main straight-ahead wall is the home view, a browser window controlled by a tool bar. It can be zoomed to occupy the full screen, momentarily hiding the side walls. The left wall shows your browsing history, pages you’ve visited. It’s much easier navigating to these pages visually vs. the usual cryptic browser back button:

simply right click a page to bring it back to the home view.

The right wall is a multi-talented workhorse. It can be automatically filled with pages linked from the current home view, avoiding interrupting current attention while allowing instant jumps to linked pages. A handy use for this is pre-loading top entries in search engine results lists. The right wall can also be used like a corkboard, loaded with pages to be kept handy for quick reference; this is called making it “sticky.” And it can be put in “4-live” mode which displays four active browser windows with clickable pages. This allows quick site viewing and comparing, or monitoring multiple auto-updating pages simultaneously, such as saving/tracking multiple auction items through the sale process. Right-wall pages can be rearranged, scrolled, or flipped between Auto Crawl and sticky. And right-wall and sticky contents are separately cleared.

Pop-up window behavior, which is normally an annoyance, is customizable: ignore, open in new window, open on right wall, open in current browser, or ask for instructions.

An elegant “rooms” feature extends browser bookmarks/favorites, allowing saving and sharing collections of Web pages as single files. Any selected pages can be grouped; you might gather family, recipe, financial, or technical pages. Rooms can hold static pages (content when pages were collected) or dynamic pages (links to pages as they are when the room is viewed). Opening a room displays pages as they were positioned when the room was saved.

Browse3D is easily purchased online and downloaded/installed/registered; a free version lacking a few

features is also available. The software requires a relatively powerful PC; it checks operation when installing. But most relatively current PCs should be adequate. Because of how it uses screen space, Browse3D is most impressive on larger monitors.

Company: Browse3D Corporation

Product: Browse3D

Price: Free or \$29.95

URL: <[www.browse3d.com](http://www.browse3d.com)>

Telephone: (888) 444-3200

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## **The New, The Best, And the Worst**

**By Pim Borman**

**Vista...**

"A distant view or prospect, especially one seen through an opening, as between rows of buildings or trees" <<http://Dictionary.com>>.

It is also the name of the long-awaited next version of Microsoft Windows, not available until at least the second half of 2006, but already widely previewed and discussed in the PC magazines. What do we glimpse in the distance? Should we fight or switch?

The most significant improvement in Vista might well be security, stated to be a primary goal. Only time will tell. We'll still be facing continuing patches, updates and periodic Service Packs, I expect.

New Internet Explorer 7 will be a major make-over, mostly to catch up with features long since available in Opera and Firefox. It will also be available to current Windows XP users. Windows Media Player gets a boost, but will also be available in Windows XP.

Vista will appear in 32 and 64-bit versions, to accommodate the new 64-bit CPUs now available from AMD and Intel. Visually, the windows will sport new folder icons that show thumbnails of their contents, although I wonder how they handle folders with dozens of subfolders and files. If your graphics card can handle it, the icons will also be semi-transparent; wow!

Originally, Vista was supposed to support a new file system, WINFS. I understand that this file system does away with branching directory trees to store files. Instead, files all get dumped in large containers, maybe such as the current "My Documents" areas. Instead of assigning unique file names you label the files with any number of suitable tags, similar to the labels currently used in Picasa2. The contents of the files are also indexed on the go to facilitate a search for keywords such as already provided by Google Desktop Search and Yahoo Desktop Search. Vista is expected to include a similar search function even before WINFS eventually is implemented. But WINFS will not initially be part of Vista.

As *PC Magazine* puts it "... it increasingly appears that Vista's differentiating features, aside from the

sleek new shell interface, will be the ones that are less visible to typical users: hardened security, better diagnostics, and improved manageability in enterprise environments.”

Vista will require an up-to-date computer system, with plenty of processor speed, memory, and graphics capability. Manufacturers of scanners and printers will surely provide the necessary drivers for newer equipment, but older peripherals may no longer work. Is it likely that it will be worth the additional cost and aggravation to upgrade?

Dedicated gamers will love it—they need all the speed they can get, at any cost. Also, if you work with demanding graphics programs, large databases, or similar CPU-intensive programs, you’ll probably want Vista for better support of multi-core, 64-bit CPUs. Media enthusiasts will love the new features, but why use them on a general-purpose computer?

For the rest of us, we’re probably better off waiting until we need to buy a new computer that is almost certain to include Vista, whether we like it or not. At least we’ll get it at a discount. I estimate that MS Windows, Office, and Media Player contain at least 50% bells and whistles that are of no interest to 75% of its users.

Last year Microsoft announced a crippled version of Windows, called Windows XP Starter Edition, being made available at low cost in certain developing countries. According to CNet News.com <<http://snipurl.com/winstart>>, the local versions of the program were made available in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Russia. Cost in Thailand was reported to be \$36, not including MS

Works. Its intended use is in local schools for the obvious reason: catch ‘em young. **Computer Revolution In The Classroom & Linux**

“The MIT Media Lab has launched a new research initiative to develop a \$100 laptop—a technology that could revolutionize how we educate the world’s children. To achieve this goal, a new, non-profit association, One Laptop per Child (OLPC), has been created.”

“The machines, which will run a version of the Linux operating system, will also include other applications, some developed by MIT researchers, as well as country-specific software. ‘Software has gotten too fat and unreliable, so we started with Linux.’” <<http://snipurl.com/mitlap>>.

These two quotes from recent MIT press releases point at new directions in the Computer Revolution. First of all, there is the realization that computers are here to stay as a basic necessity in a civilized society. To the three Rs of basic education we need to add a fourth Requirement, computer literacy. The cost of general purpose computers has to come down further to make them available to every school child, even in this country, let alone in the developing nations. That clearly includes the need to eliminate the high cost of the MS Windows operating system and commercial productivity programs written for MS Windows. Essentially free Linux is the obvious alternative.

Here is another quote, from desktop.linux.com <<http://snipurl.com/INaccess>>: “A number of Indiana high school students returning for the fall semester will find brand-new Linux desktops in their classrooms. Under the Indiana Access Program, which uses



desktop Linux systems and standard hardware configurations to keep costs low, Wintergreen Systems Inc. and Linspire Inc. are providing computers for classrooms. The arrangement could result in as many as 300,000 Linux machines being deployed during coming years, the companies said in a statement.” And Indiana is not a third-world nation.

When a new generation of students gets weaned on Linux, they are likely to continue using that operating system in the future, creating the critical mass that it takes to become generally accepted as an alternate desktop tool. Some of the students will inevitably be interested in hacking the system, resulting in new and improved programs, as well as some new Linux viruses, I fear. Their efforts will be facilitated by the availability of all the underlying code, in contrast with MS Windows programs that jealously hide the source code.

Besides the effort to introduce Linux in school computers, several large cities as well as developing nations, notably China, have made it a priority to deploy Linux-based desktop computers. In the near future most of the growth of Linux will probably take place in developing areas of the world. Acceptance in the USA and other Western countries will be slowed by the difficulty or reluctance to transfer databases from MS Windows-based programs to comparable Linux programs. It may take another generation. But, after maturing overseas, Linux is likely to return in force to the Western world.

***Pim Borman is a member of the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., and you can contact him at <[swipcug@sigecom.net](mailto:swipcug@sigecom.net)>.***

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## **Managing the Information Flood**

### **By Gene Barlow**

It is said that we are living in the Information Age. This has been made possible by the widespread availability of computers connected to the Internet. This gives us access to millions of Web sites containing a wealth of information. What we are finding is that we actually have an “information overload” to contend with. Finding information on the Internet, or even on our large gigabyte hard drives, is becoming a real problem. The key to effectively finding information is organizing our access to this information. The better organized we are on our computers, the quicker we can find and use the information available to us.

Being organized in our use of the Internet and our computers can be a real challenge without the right tools. We are faced with struggling to manage the folders in our Favorites list to keep track of where things are on the Internet. These folders are cumbersome to use and a pain to reorganize. So, instead of better organizing our Internet access points, we end up with a wildly growing Favorites list that is impossible to find anything in. Finding files on our hard drive is equally challenging. Using My

Computer or Windows Explorer is not a good way to find the information on our hard drives. These tools are simply not up to the challenges we face today in organizing our access to information. There must be a better way to help us get organized!

I recently became aware of an exciting new product that has taken tabbed browsing to a whole new level and can make the task of organizing your access to the internet and to the files on your hard drive so much simpler. The tool is Optimal Desktop Pro 4.0 from Optimal Access, Inc. <[www.optimalaccess.com](http://www.optimalaccess.com)>. The talented developers of this powerful product have put in place a single tool that you can use to easily bookmark your favorite destinations on the Internet. It is also a wonderful tool to help you organize access to the many files on your hard drive. In addition, it has some powerful functions to manage your use of RSS feeds, a rapidly growing area of the Internet. I will briefly give you an overview of this product and how to use it in each of these three ways to access information.

### **Overview of Optimal Desktop Pro**

Optimal Desktop Pro let's you access files, folders, Web pages and RSS feeds in one place and uses a familiar format that all of us can quickly understand and use—filing cabinets. You can organize your information into one or more Cabinets with Optimal Desktop Pro. So, you could set up Cabinets based on subjects like news, sports, travel or anything that meet your needs. These can include any combination of your favorite Internet access points, files on your computer's hard drive, and syndicated feeds you subscribe to or define. Each Cabinet is organized with

a set of up to 32 Drawers that you define. Drawers appear as tabs along the right edge of your screen. You may want to have a Drawer that holds access to your digital photographs and your digital publishing tools and another Drawer for all of your written documents. Again, you have complete flexibility to set these up in any way that is meaningful to you. Within each Drawer you can define Sections that will contain your individual items. For example, in your photograph Drawer, you may want a Section for subject types such as pictures of grandkids, vacations, wild flowers, etc. Each Section stores a link to your information, no matter where it is stored on your hard drive or on the Internet.

Setting up and changing your Cabinets, Drawers, and Sections is very easy to do in Optimal Desktop Pro. In most cases, you just drag and drop something to create a new Drawer or Section. You can quickly identify the Drawer and the Section by name, icon, or color to make it easy to find and remember. So, setting up and tailoring your desktop makes using this product simple and fun to do. If you don't get things organized quite right the first time you set them up, don't worry, it is very easy to quickly change and modify your organization structure.

### **Managing your Internet Links**

The Internet is a wonderful source of information about all sorts of subjects. Unfortunately, the information on the Internet grew in a random, haphazard pattern with little to relate one piece of information to another. So, finding and accessing information on the Internet is a bit difficult to do. Some companies like Yahoo <<http://www.yahoo.com>> have built indexes to the information

on the Internet. By going down through their various levels of indexes, you may find the information that you want. Other companies like Google <<http://www.google.com>> have built search tools that let you enter a few key words about your topic, and the tool will show you what's on the Internet with those key words. Using both the indexes and search tools takes some skill and many steps to locate the information you want. Once you find it, you should save the link to that information so that you can use it again without having to dig for it again in the indexes and search tools.

With Internet Explorer, you can only save these links in your Favorites list. The Favorites list only offers you one level of organization, folders. So, you end up with dozens of folders and many links within each folder. Finding links in a large Favorites list is not easy to do. Tabbed browsers are becoming very popular because they allow us to browse multiple pages quickly and bookmark our favorite sites with multiple levels of tabs. Optimal Desktop Pro gives you three levels of organization to manage your Internet links. You have Cabinets, Drawers, and Sections in which to organize and store your important links. So, instead of hunting endlessly in many folders on your Favorites list, you quickly select the right Cabinet, Drawer, and Section that contains your link. Three quick clicks and you have found your Internet page. Optimal Desktop Pro also offers a Search tool for searching your Cabinet, Drawer, and Sections, so you can easily use the Search tool to locate the links you are looking for.

Since Optimal Desktop Pro is so easy to use, it will be easy to get your current Internet links organized. I would

start with your current Favorites set of folders and build on it from there. You may want to set up a Cabinet just for your Internet links. Then define 4-6 Drawers that would define the general types of links that you use most. For example, you may want to have a Drawer set up for your Travel links, another for your Account links, and still another for your Shopping links. Within each Drawer, you can set up Sections that will contain the various links that you need. For example, in your Travel drawer, you may have an Airline Section, a Hotel Section, and a Car Rental Section. You can also set up Sections for National Parks, Ski Resorts, or any other category that makes sense to you. If you get too many Sections in a Drawer, set up another Drawer to contain some of the Sections. Optimal Desktop Pro comes with some sample Cabinets that you might want to start out with and merge in the links from your current Favorites list.

### **Managing your Hard Drive**

The computers we use today are very powerful tools. They have hard drives that can contain many gigabytes of information and programs. It is not unusual to have a computer with close to a million files on the hard drives. The information on a computer's hard drives is organized into hard drives, partitions, and many layers of folders in each partition. The tools that come with Windows to find and gain access to any of the files on your computer is either Windows Explorer or My Computer. Both work about the same way and let you point to the hard drive, the partition within the hard drive, and the various folders in each partition. So, finding a file on your computer is a matter of stepping down through the

Tree on Windows Explorer or My Computer till you find the file you want. It may sound easy, but in practical use, it is not all that easy to find stuff on your computer. Similar files get placed in many locations on your computer, and finding all of these locations is what makes finding information on your hard drive difficult. There is a search tool in Windows that you can use to find a file by its name, but this is slow and not convenient to use.

The biggest problem with this organization approach of hard drives is that in order to change the organization, you must physically move the files. Moving data files is fairly easy to do, but when you move them, references to those files are lost. So, when you move a file to better organize it, references to that file's location are broken, and your computer may not find it easily. This is even more difficult to do if you try to move your application programs to different locations on your hard drive. Special software utilities must be used to do this and they often don't work very well. You may end up having to reinstall your application programs just to better organize them on your hard drive.

With Optimal Desktop Pro, you can completely organize your hard drive access without having to physically move files around. So, if you have your digital photos located in four or five different locations on your hard drive, you can use Optimal Desktop Pro to place the access to all of these in one Drawer and get to all of them very quickly. This will make them seem as if they are all bunched together in one location on your hard drive even though they are physically scattered on the drive. Not only that, with this exciting

tool, you can access the same file from multiple Drawers or Sections. Again, using the digital photos example, you may want to have access to a photo by the month it was taken, another access by the subject matter, and a third access by the names of the individuals in the photos. All of this is possible with the power of Optimal Desktop Pro.

### **Managing your RSS Feeds**

The Internet is also evolving. The latest development is syndicated feeds. RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a Web format for delivering news-like content to your computer. They are designated as "XML" links on most of the popular Web pages today. It has become very popular with the rapid expansion of Weblogs (or blogs) that are showing up in large numbers on the Internet. Blogs are Web pages comprised of usually short, frequently updated items and Web links. Blogging is fast becoming the way that news and commentary are being delivered over the Internet. Perhaps you are already a dedicated follower of certain blogs. To read these RSS feeds, you need to use a news aggregator (also called a news reader). Optimal Desktop Pro is such a news reader and can handle the input from these RSS feeds. Using Optimal Desktop Pro, you can organize your blogs and other news feeds into convenient Cabinets, Drawers, and Sections.

Optimal Desktop Pro also lets you define your own syndicated feeds. A query wizard lets you define filters based on user defined key word filters, headline filters, stock ticker symbols, category filters, industry source filters, and location filters, so you can define your own news and have it delivered to your desktop. You can also see many

popular Web portals like Yahoo, New York Times, NPR, and others that offer syndication feeds to various segments of their content. You can use another wizard in Optimal Desktop to connect to a library of feeds and subscribe to any you wish!

### **Obtaining Optimal Desktop Pro**

Optimal Desktop Pro is a powerful tool that you will enjoy using on your computer. It will not only help you better organize your access to information sources, but will make retrieving this information fast and easy to do. Optimal Desktop Pro lists for \$60, but you can purchase the same product at the user group discount price of just \$39. Look for it in our User Group Store at <http://www.usergroupstore.com>. Click on any of the yellow “Buy Now” buttons to get to our secure Web order form. Complete the form, including the special user group code of UGNL0505, and submit it. We will receive it shortly and normally ship your order the following morning. We ship via the Post Office, and delivery is usually in 2-3 days. You may share this discount offer with your immediate family and close friends. These prices are not available to others not involved with a user group.

*Copyrighted May 2005 by User Group Relations.*

*Gene Barlow is the president of User Group Relations, a consulting firm specializing in promoting computer products to the user group community. He has over 40 years of experience with computer systems. He worked for IBM for 34 years and managed IBM's user group support organization for 14 years. He helped hundreds of user groups get started and is sometimes called the Father of User Groups for his involvement.*

*When he left IBM, he set up his own consulting firm and has represented many software vendors to the user group community the past 9 years. He is an outstanding speaker, writer, and helper of end users and loves working with user groups. You may contact him at [gene@ugr.com](mailto:gene@ugr.com).*



## **Informative Tech News By Bob Elgines**

### **More Free Anti-Spyware**

There is another one out there like Spybot called SpyBlaster, which can be downloaded at: <http://www.javacoolsoftware.com>. There is a slight catch, you will need to manually update, unless you pay \$10 for an automatic update subscription. This program will prevent installation of spyware.

### **PCI Express vs. AGP-8X Graphic Cards**

Are they here to stay? The PCI-Express cards are about the same speed and higher in price. So don't run out and change your Mother Board to accommodate the PCI-Express. The only difference right now is the Bandwidth, but there are not programs out there to use this advantage. It's main use would be used in Gaming.

### **Windows 2000 Info!**

Microsoft released an update containing a collection of previous patches. The final service pack for Windows 2000 is SP4, which was released in March, 2003. Support for Windows 2000 will end in 2010.

### **What is “Windows XP N”?**

Windows XP N is a version without the MS Media Player. Windows XP Home (the standard version) sells for the same price.

### **What is “Windows XP Media”?**

Basically the standard home version with all of the latest photo, music, and movie enhancement pack. This includes such things as Plus!Photo Story, Media player, Movie Maker, etc. These items can be download from Microsoft for free in most cases.

### **New Microsoft Windows Software**

Microsoft’s new operating system called “Longhorn” has been officially named “Windows Vista,” and is set to be released to the public in 2006. The three new goals are summarized by Microsoft as Clear (new methods), Confident (better security), and Connected (seamless).

### **New WD Hard Drive**

Western Digital released a high-class series of Caviar drives, including a high capacity drive of 400 GB SATA (Serial). This drive has a speed of 7200 rpm, 16 MB of cache, and a transfer rate of 150 MBps. The WD Caviar SE16 400 GB is priced at approximately \$280 with a three year warranty. An even faster WD SATA 2 drive is currently appearing in the market.

*Bob Elgines is a member of the Colorado Computer Club of Lake Havasu, AZ. You can contact him at <elginesz@rraz.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.*

## **Simple Password Practices Keep PC And Online Data Secure**

**By Gabe Goldberg**

Password dilemma: We can’t live an online life without them, but if they’re too numerous to remember, they encourage unsafe practices. What to do?

First, basics. A password is just the key that opens a computer lock. It may gain access to a newspaper’s online edition, protect banking records, let you bid on auctions, open a frequent-flyer account, or do anything requiring verified identity.

Some Web sites assign passwords; most allow choosing them. Rules for selecting passwords are easy to find, but are often impractical. Don’t use easily guessed familiar names or words; use letters and numbers and special characters? OK. Avoid anything related to facts about yourself? Makes sense. Don’t share passwords with anyone? Good advice. Change passwords periodically? Oops, now it’s a memory test. Use unique passwords everywhere? Hm, that takes a *lot* of passwords. Don’t write them down or store them in a computer file? Tilt!

Maintaining passwords is a nuisance. So some people use one password for everything—a bad idea, since sharing or compromising one access opens them all. Password hierarchies are common: use one password for financial matters, another for commerce, and one for trivials such as newspaper sites. That avoids revealing your sensitive e-mail/password combination to junk Web sites.

But don’t use a common password for all e-commerce sites (amazon.com,



buy.com, etc.) since they're occasionally hacked. And treat sites like PayPal as financial rather than e-commerce. And don't just guess which password you used on a site; some sites lock accounts after just a few failed logins.

As passwords proliferate, it's common to store them in a computer file. And having too many site-assigned passwords guarantees the need to record them. But please, don't call the file "passwords.txt" and don't use the word "password" in it. The paranoid and geeky encrypt such files, but that risks losing the file by forgetting the encryption key.

You can print and save registration pages, but that leads to bulky files, cumbersome to search and requiring updating. Some people use an address book or print lists of sites and accounts, then handwrite passwords. But that still needs updating, and can be lost, destroyed, or found by someone untrustworthy.

If you have multiple e-mail addresses, note which you use on a given site, since that's often the key for logging in or receiving password reminders.

Hackers use special software to attack logins, applying dictionary word lists and other guessing techniques. Passwords are described as "strong" (hard to crack) if they have at least eight characters, include upper/lower case and punctuation characters and at least one digit. So even if you use a memory aid for remembering passwords—such as words from a poem—convert them to strong passwords in a way that only you will know.

High-tech devices can add security,

but they're usually used only in business settings; they include biometric devices that check fingerprints or eye structure and random logon-key generators.

Software password managers are more practical. These record and secure passwords and then auto-fill online logins. Good ones offer a "don't remember/don't ask" option to avoid recording info about sensitive sites. Encryption is desirable but not mandatory; it should be possible to secure the password manager itself with a master password.

Many managers are free, some are bought, and common software such as Web browsers and e-mail clients often includes it. Google returns many hits related to "password manager," and classy software site Tucows [www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com) numbers 300 such tools. Before installing one, make sure it supports your software applications, especially if they're non-Microsoft.

Many people don't secure home computers—but consider cleaners, workers, friends wandering through, perhaps even having permission to use the computer. Suddenly security becomes more appealing. If you handle money online, look at banking/financial sites occasionally for unauthorized transactions.

Remember that you may occasionally need access to secure sites while away from your computer. You can copy passwords to a thumbdrive or PDA or simply print them, but remember that they're powerful keys and must be protected. Before traveling, check your passwords so you're not surprised on the road. If you leave your computer running, you can access it remotely via tools such as GoToMyPC.

On business-owned PCs, separate

personal from work-related material. Determine whether your office has policies for personal computer use and monitoring of computer activity. Some businesses install keystroke loggers that can capture passwords before they're encrypted. And remember that system administrators can often defeat security measures as part of their job, so you may not want to store sensitive personal material at work.

Work and home PCs both need disaster preparation, so family members or colleagues can access what's needed in an emergency. Work-related passwords and instructions can be stored securely so they're available but can't be secretly used.

For home computers and facilities such as e-mail and finance, remember that many ISPs and companies have privacy policies prohibiting revealing information to family members, even in cases of illness or death. Instructions and important passwords should be stored with essential family records. Note that changing situations may require special care—for example, a divorce might motivate tight security.

*This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <[www.aarp.org/computers](http://www.aarp.org/computers)>. and is copyrighted by AARP 2004/2005. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail the author, Gabe Goldberg, at <[gabe@gabegold.com](mailto:gabe@gabegold.com)> when you print or p*



## Tid Bits

### By Gregory West

#### Walkman/Phone/Etc.

Up for a new cell phone and more? Be prepared to see the people around you wired for almost everything: “Sony Ericsson W900 is a high quality fully specified music player, phone, and imaging device capable of super-fast downloads of all types of multimedia – music, video and graphics.” This gadget is a UTMS machine...what the heck is that? It is a “(Universal Mobile Telephone System): Third generation telecommunications system based on WCDMA-DS.” (google search). With a 2 GB card you can listen to over 1000 songs while calling your boss to explain why you are late for work again. According to Sony, this is also “an entertainment device. The W900 exploits the UMTS-delivered capabilities to the full, delivering fast and smooth download and browsing of video, games, sound, and graphics. The high performance 3D Java gaming engine is put to the test with the embedded Asphalt Urban GT 3D from Gameloft, where users can experience the thrills of extreme racing at the wheel of the ultimate sports cars.”

#### Biometric Thumb Drive

Not really; yes it is a USB flash drive; however, this baby is much more than your average storage case. This is bionopoly. According to gizmodo.com, this is what is known as a fingerprint reader, “the first USB drive with built-in biometric authentication” or a “bio-computer on a stick.” Most thumb or flash drives will only store your files; Bionopoly does much more, and for about the same price as the others. This gadget claims it will “will pave the way

for you to do away with the usual start up process of your computer and directly boot to it. This is because the bootable USB flash drive has a built-in operating system of its own. The system further contains OpenOffice to support Microsoft Office files, the Mozilla FireFox web browser, an e-mail client, as well as an instant messaging client that supports services like Yahoo and AOL, and a PDF creating program.” Fabulous features, however I am going to wait until they offer more GBs of storage...and the price wars really begin.

#### **Convert Your Files to PDF—Free**

It doesn’t get much simpler to make your own PFD-creations. Some free PDF makers insert advertising or watermarks, but not the CutePDF utility. And to make things even better, this program’s “configuration choices are pretty close to nil” (PCWorld November 2005). Get the full details and program download here: <[www.cutepdf.com](http://www.cutepdf.com)>.

*Gregory West is a member of the Sarnia Computer User Group. Contact him at <[editor@scug.ca](mailto:editor@scug.ca)>.*

*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.*



#### **BOARD MEETING**

**12/11/05**

**Carol Sanzi**

#### **Board Members Present**

President Gary DeNise, Secretary Carol Sanzi, Treasurer Chester Blechinger, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate, Publications Committee Chairman Bill Agnew, and Member at Large, Bob Clyne. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

#### **Old Business**

Treasurer Chester Blechinger reported that the balance on hand is \$6,785.73. The membership stands at 81.

[Continued on page 30](#)



#### **Letter From The Editor**

##### **TIP OF THE DAY**

Perhaps you have read Kim Komando’s once a week column in the Detroit News or heard her radio broadcast. Somehow I got on her list and have been getting her weekly Electronic Newsletter and Tip of the Day by e-mail. She also has a Cool Site of the Day and News of the Day.

I find her Tip of the Day quick reading, and, if not useful every day for me, always interesting. She gives detailed answers to many questions sent in to her.

If you are interested in lots of tips and information, sign up for her free stuff at <[www.komando.com/newsletter.asp](http://www.komando.com/newsletter.asp)>. It’s cheaper than PC Magazine.

Bill

## Continued from page 29

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Warner Mach \$7.07 for refreshments. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried.

SEMCO's move to the Arvin Meritor building is contingent upon receiving a letter of confirmation. Hopefully, this documentation will be received shortly. Read the January DATA BUS or see the SEMCO Web site for verification of meeting location.

### **New Business**

Bob Clyne moved to create the two member-at-large board positions for the coming year. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Chester Blechinger received the form for the Michigan Annual Report. Tom Callow offered to complete the report and file it with the state.

It was suggested that, as a courtesy, SEMCO should notify Oakland University of the proposed relocation of the monthly meetings. No action was taken at this time due to the uncertainty regarding the new location.

Bob Clyne reminded the Board that in April SEMCO would be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Plans should be made to commemorate the event.

Carol Sanzi moved to adjourn. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.



**GENERAL MEETING**  
**12/11/05**  
**Carol Sanzi**

With President Gary DeNise presiding, nominations were taken for the following board positions:

President: Chester Blechinger nominated Gary DeNise; Bob Clyne seconded.

Vice President: Chester Blechinger

nominated Richard Jackson; Chuck Moery seconded.

Treasurer: Bob Clyne nominated Bette Gay; Jerry Comptois seconded. Chester Blechinger nominated Chuck Moery; Bob Clyne seconded.

Secretary: Bob Clyne nominated Carol Sanzi; Richard Jackson seconded.

Member at Large: Richard Jackson nominated Chester Blechinger; Bob Clyne seconded. Carol Sanzi nominated Bob Clyne; Chuck Moery seconded. Gary DeNise nominated Paul Cervero; Jerry Comptois seconded.

Bob Clyne moved to close the nominations. Carol Sanzi seconded the motion, and it was carried.

It was announced that members should submit any changes to their membership data, including e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and permission to publish data, to Chester Blechinger.

Gene Barlow has discount offers available for various software products that he carries. Check out his Web site at <http://www.ugr.com>. Use special purchase code UGHOL05.

If you are willing to write a review of software programs, contact Franz Breidenich or Bob Clyne for a free review copy.

### **December Meeting Attendance: 27**



**SIG-IBM MEETING**  
**12/11/05**  
**Carol Sanzi**

Bob Clyne nominated Tom Callow and Warner Mach to be Co-Chairmen of SIG-IBM. Chester Blechinger seconded the motion. Bob Clyne moved to close nominations. Richard Jackson seconded the motion, and it was carried.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



**SIG-IBM**  
**Tom Callow**  
**Warner Mach**



**SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE**  
**Tom Callow**  
**Interim Chairman**

**Jan. 8: Microsoft's .NET and Visual Basic.** Patrick Steele, a Microsoft MVP (Most Valuable Professional) will provide a brief description of Microsoft's .NET Web Services strategy and then present an introduction to programming in Microsoft Visual Basic.

### Free Programming Languages From Microsoft

by Richard Jackson  
SEMCO Vice President

Microsoft has Visual Studio 2005 Express Edition for hobbyist, novice, and student developer as a free download until November 7, 2006. This supplements our January presentation on Dot Net and Visual Basic. To find out more and download the software visit <<http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/express/default.aspx>>. For frequently asked questions go to <<http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/express/support/faq/#general>>. The coding4fun Web site is also helpful <<http://msdn.microsoft.com/coding4fun/>>.

**Jan. 8: Pocket DVD Studio and Using Rules in Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express:** SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate Pocket DVD Studio, which converts full length DVD movies to files which fit on a flash memory card and can be played on your Windows Mobile based PDA. He will then demonstrate how you can use rules under Outlook or Outlook Express to automate e-mail management tasks.

### NOVICE-IBM GROUP Rotating Volunteer Hosts

**Jan. 8: Help And Q & A:** Discussion directed by the audience. No question is too simple!!



**SIG-ADVANCED**  
**Franz Breidenich**

**Feb. 6, 2006:** (No January meeting), 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.

### February 2006 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)

**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., January 15, 11:59 p.m.**

Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use [Editor address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: <[agnew@bignet.net](mailto:agnew@bignet.net)>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

**Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly.** Contact the [Editor \(address Page 2\)](#).

**AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)**

Jan. 28–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](mailto:thunder@tir.com)> or 313-341-8855.

**COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

Jan. 4–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: Open Office Demo.

**DCOM Computer Club**

Jan. 13–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)**

Jan. 10–Tuesday, 7pm; Kelly Services Bldg, 999 West Big Beaver, corner Crooks & Big Beaver, Troy. <<http://www.dpug.org>>.

**FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)**

Jan. 10–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**

Jan. 22–Sunday, 3pm–5pm; Birmingham Temple, 28611 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <[terry@macgroup.org](mailto:terry@macgroup.org)> or 313-571-9817. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: Mac OS X for Beginners, and Hot Tips.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

Jan. 21–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](mailto:cassiemac@yahoo.com)> or 313-971-8743. Topic: Demo Fair by Members.

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

Jan. 12–(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)**

Feb. 7–Tuesday 7:30pm, (1st Tuesday); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel at <[Don@VanSyckel.net](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net)>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: Home Networking and Wireless Access Points.

**MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)**

Jan. 14–Saturday, 12:30–2:30pm, (2nd Saturday); Adam Cardinal Maida Alumni Library, St. Mary's Preparatory School, Orchard Lake; Web: <<http://www.mdlug.org>>. Info: Richard Jackson 248-546-3694.

**Wayne State U. Mac User Group**

Jan. 14–Saturday, 10:00am–Noon (2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny McLampy 248-477-0190.



### SPECIAL MEMBER BENEFIT

#### Telesthetic

##### ISP Service

- \$4.95 per month plus \$5 setup fee
- Rate for SEMCO members only
- Unlimited hours

##### Long Distance Phone Service

- Without ISP service: \$2.95/month plus usage charge
- 4.5cents/min 24/7 (plus taxes, etc.)
- Billing plus call detail by e-mail
- 30 sec minimum, then 6 sec billing increment
- Visa or Mastercard

Contact SEMCO member John Lodden or  
Customer Service <[service@telesthetic.com](mailto:service@telesthetic.com)>  
or 1-800-807-4515.

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



### DECEMBER REFRESHMENT DONORS

Warner Mach, Coordinator  
Betty MacKenzie  
Creative Technology  
Roland Maki  
Carol Sanzi  
Gary DeNise  
Chuck Moery

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

**A1-Super Computer Sales** shows. See

[www.a1-supercomputersales.com](http://www.a1-supercomputersales.com)

or [www.a1scs.com](http://www.a1scs.com)

for show schedule.

### COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

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

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

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

**Almost Anything:** Vander-Schrier

**AutoCAD:** Comptois

**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](mailto:clyne@lodden.com)  
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm ..... [tcallow@monaghanpc.com](mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com)  
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime ..... [jerryandotoo@juno.com](mailto:jerryandotoo@juno.com)  
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves ..... [scook48227@ameritech.net](mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net)  
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm ..... [jvanders@myself.com](mailto:jvanders@myself.com)  
Yuhasz, Steve ..... [Help@yuhasz.org](mailto:Help@yuhasz.org)



SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

## **SEMCO CALENDAR—January/February**

**ArvinMeritor Building  
2135 West Maple Road  
Troy, Michigan**

### **JANUARY 8—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)**

**SEMCO Board** Meeting at 12:00 noon. For Officers and SIG Chairpersons.  
Other members are invited to attend.

**SEMCO General** Meeting at 1:30 pm.

### **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**

**SIG-IBM** 1:45 pm. **Program: Microsoft's .NET and Visual Basic.** Patrick Steele, a Microsoft MVP (Most Valuable Professional) will provide a brief description of Microsoft's .NET Web Services strategy and then present an introduction to programming in Microsoft Visual Basic.

**SOCIAL PERIOD** 3:15 pm. Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

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

**SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE** 3:45 pm. **Program: Pocket DVD Studio and Using Rules in Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express:** SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate Pocket DVD Studio, which converts full length DVD movies to files that fit on a flash memory card and can be played on your Windows Mobile based PDA. He will then demonstrate how you can use rules under Outlook or Outlook Express to automate e-mail management tasks.

**SIG-ADVANCED**, **February 6, 2006—MONDAY, 6:45 pm**, (No meeting in January), 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.**

### **February 12—SEMCO SUNDAY**

**<http://www.semco.org>**

**PUBLIC INVITED**

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

**SEMCO Meetings at [ArvinMeritor](#)  
2135 West Maple Road, Troy**



**DIRECTIONS**

From I-75, take Exit 69 to westbound Big Beaver Rd. (16 Mile). Turn left (south) on Crooks Rd. Turn right (west) on Maple Rd. (15 Mile). Turn left (south) on Mapletawn Dr. Turn right into the parking lot at the rear of the ArvinMeritor building. The building is shaped like an X. Park. Enter the building at the entrance at the center of the rear of the building. Follow the “SEMCO” signs.

SEMCO thanks the [ArvinMeritor](#) Corporation for their hospitality in providing their facility for our meetings.



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

**SEMCO (future meetings)**

**January 8**

**February 12**

**FIRST CLASS MAIL  
Dated Material**

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