SEMCO

Official Newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE

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

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Your mailing label and membership cards list the month and year your membership expires. Newsletters will not be sent after the month of expiration. Back issues may not be available. Renew your membership as early as possible to avoid missing any newsletters.

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SEMCO 30th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, April 9, 2006
at ArvinMeritor 2135 West Maple Rd., Troy, Michigan
at 1:30 PM

ArvinMeritor is between Coolidge Hwy. and Crooks Rd.

1:30 PM to 2:45 PM
Master of Ceremonies, former SEMCO President, Jim Rarus: "30 Years of Personal Computing—a Look Back at People and Events," includes slides. Also, snippets of 25th Anniversary Video provided by Steve Yuhasz.
Doorprize Drawing

2:45 PM to 3:45 PM
Refreshments and Antique Computer Display

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM
Steve Yuhasz, former SEMCO President, will moderate a Panel Discussion: "Computer Technology: What has improved and what has gotten worse over the past 30 years."

All times are approximate!
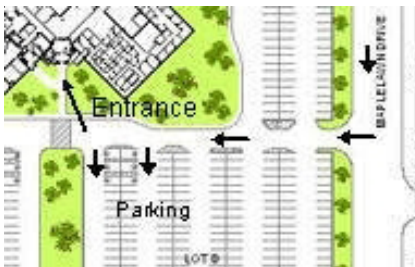
ArvinMeritor Site

From West Maple Road, turn south on Maplelawn Dr., then turn right into the parking lot at the rear of the ArvinMeritor building.

Entrance from parking lot

Security arrangements are incomplete at this time. Someone will direct you in the procedure on meeting day.

As time goes forward, my health gets more complicated. I have been a Type II diabetic for a few years now and other than some swelling in the legs, my sugar control is pretty good, which I assume many of you can relate to. Problem is I started the sugar control too late and suffered serious heart damage. Now it seems that I have developed a large blood clot in my lower leg, I believe from a fall, and the doctor put me on Coumadin (Warfarin), better known as rat poison. It has a long list of drugs that cause interactions. I am already a walking pharmacy so now it gets complicated. This turn for the worse seems to bring other unexpected complications. I have started getting temporary spikes upward in my blood pressure for no apparent reason, which sometimes causes a nosebleed. I am afraid to go anyplace these days because I might get a nosebleed, although I can stop it now rather easily. My doctor has prescribed medication for my blood pressure as a solution to the changes and I sure hope it works. Getting old sure gets complicated, but the alternative to getting old "really sucks." It looks like I will have five more months on the rat poison, if I survive. I have talked to many people also taking Caumadin who tell me even worse stories about bleeding where you don't want to and a lack of good control by their doctor.

Right now, I need a blood test at least once a week for my INR, (the clotting ability of the blood). The doctor says I can purchase a machine to do that test at home, but I checked on the Web and it would cost $2495 (no decimal point). I'll let the clinic do the testing.

Medicare only pays for that if you have valve problems in your heart. I'm still doing my best to continue cheating my wife out of the life insurance money. Whenever I start to slow down on exercise etc., I get a vision of my wife sitting on the beach of some south sea island with a stud sitting next to her, and she is writing a check on my insurance money for their next vacation. That little vision gets me right out of the chair to exercise.

How Secure is Your System?
I read an article in Information Week magazine that was both amusing and interesting. It concerned a company whose CIO hired security investigators to test how good their system stood up to being infiltrated. The director of the network operations center was sure they couldn't break into the systems or facilities, but they very soon proved him wrong. Some of the weaknesses were so stupid that I had to chuckle, such as many of the passwords for work stations were written on a note taped to the machine or hidden under the keyboard. They gained access to limited access places just by calling the receptionist and telling them that some agents were coming in to do an audit and needed access, which was easily granted to the very people who made the call. Office keys were sometimes in the secretary's desk. You can find this article at <http://www.informationweek.com/management/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=177100115> and you'll find it enlightening.

Leaky Capacitor Update
A while back, I wrote about a leaky capacitor problem on motherboards that I read about in Ed Foster's Gripe Line, and gave you the URL to find out more.

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Since then, I received a message from Carey Holzman, author of Healthy PC, who tells me that it is a four-year-old issue and that there has been "some" resolution in the matter. He says he has covered it since it first came up four years ago and more information is available on his Web site. <www.careyholzman.com>. Also a second URL: <www.badcaps.net>.

Great, The Bundle is Back

Colleen Toumayan from Executive Software sent a message letting me know that their "bundle" is back. For a limited time you can get both the award winning Diskeeper 10, Home Edition, and Undelete 5, Home Edition, products for just $49.95 plus S&H. I have never heard anything but praise about these fine products. Mine is not the latest, but it always works well, and fast. Use this link to order: <http://purchase.diskeeper.com/checkout/addtocart.aspx?Item=1382>.

ExtraLabs Releases Version 3.4 of Feed Editor (an edited announcement)

ExtraLabs Software unveils Feed Editor 3.4, a full-fledged RSS editor that offers you an easy way to create and maintain RSS feeds and podcasts. Compared to other RSS editors in its category, Feed Editor combines an unprecedented number of features including support for various RSS formats, a podcasting support, a WYSIWYG HTML editor, an XML editor, an RSS Feed preview, an FTP upload and publishing, automatic date management and an ability to convert CSV or HTML to RSS, and back.

Feed Editor can create and maintain an unlimited number of RSS feeds and podcasts, thus letting you maintain and distribute multiple content streams simultaneously. To create a new RSS feed, you can use a New Feed Creation wizard that will guide you through the RSS setup process in a step-by-step fashion. Additional convenience comes with a built-in WYSIWIG HTML editor that allows you to edit a feed in much the same way as you would edit a word processing document. You can format the text, apply styling, and insert images and hyperlinks. Also, "Feed Editor" can generate a feed from a CSV and HTML file. Once a feed is ready, you can preview it and publish online using an FTP upload facility.

Read more about Feed Editor at <http://www.extralabs.net/feed-editor.htm>

Download an evaluation version to try it for free <http://www.extralabs.net/FeedEditorSetup.exe> (1.72 Mb.)

ExtraLabs Software is glad to offer the newest version of "Feed Editor" with 50% off the regular price making it just $19.95. Also, ExtraLabs will offer all user group members an additional 5% discount on the purchase of the program during April and May. Follow this link for the extra discount: <http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=74108&pc=312aY>.

Feed Editor 3.4 runs under Windows 95/98/Me/2000/NT/XP/2003. Registered customers are entitled to free lifetime updates and premium technical support. Discounts for volume buyers are available.

If You Like Games, Check This Announcement

From the creators of "Zzed" comes a new game of Wonderlines by NevoSoft. Wonderlines is a remake of a popular game. Only balls and lines remind you of its predecessor here and the rest is

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covered with the charm of novelty. A player will see a new bonus system, a new intricate game play structure and a fresh interface design. The music and visuals are great.

Puzzle, Action, Zen Way modes are different, yet each requires special skills. Generally, the game stayed nearly the same yet now you match several balls of one color in a line, but also blow them up over certain brown squares. The challenge of the game is to remove all brown squares in each level. 70 levels of the game are very different one from another. Another merit of the game is new bonuses: the miraculous multicolor ball, dazzling diamond and clever hammer, triple or quadruple bomb and others, which help a lot while making your way through Wonderlines.

Wonderlines runs under Windows 98/ME/XP/2000 and costs $19.95 (USD). NevoSoft offers a 30% discount to user group members if you use this link: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=8323-16&ss_coupon=NEVO-GPCU>. Registered customers are entitled to the unlocked game play and lifetime technical support. An evaluation version of the game, that offers 60 minutes of game play, is available as a free download at <http://www.nevosoft.com/wonderlines/wonderlines_demo.exe>.

Be aware that this vendor has no privacy statement on their Web site about protecting your information.

For more information, visit us at <http://www.nevosoft.com>

Product page link: <http://www.nevosoft.com/downloadable-game/en/games/wonderlines.html>

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 Cheapskate) Click <bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.

The New, the Best, and the Worst
Collected by Pim Borman
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Rants

It is a dark, dreary, drizzly day in mid-January as I write this, perfect for contesting a will (as they say in my native Holland) or protesting the peccability of PC peddlers.

Rant #1 concerns the software Dell installs on new computers, whether you want it or not. James Derk, computer columnist for Scripps Howard News Service, wrote recently about the effort it required to remove all the extraneous junk from someone's new Dell system: "*Dell is on the list this year for adding so much junk to their new PCs that it takes a trained technician to remove most of them. Their "starter" edition of QuickBooks is the most annoying…even popping up reminders to try the program long after you've deleted it. I know Dell sells 80 percent of its PCs to businesses*

but there's no reason to have such an invasive product and selling tactic. Most large businesses don't use QuickBooks, most small businesses already have it and consumers don't want it. Editing the Windows Registry should not be needed to remove it. (Dell gets an honorable mention for charging $25 for a USB cable to connect their "free" printers to their computers.)" <http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn2>. Elsewhere he mentions the desirability of removing the pre-installed temporary version of McAfee anti-virus. He wrote: *"If you have McAfee preinstalled on your new PC, I would uninstall it immediately and install a free product. It's not just a bias…in my computer repair business I have seen dozens of PCs with McAfee installed that are riddled with viri. Something either about McAfee's online-only product or the configuration just lets viruses pass through"* <http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn>.

As luck would have it, my neighbors asked me soon thereafter for help with the installation of their new Dell computer. The recently retired professional couple had been using a MacIntosh computer for the past eight years and were unfamiliar with MS Windows. Remembering Derk's comment, I suggested we remove the McAfee program and install Norton Internet Security. Tough luck! As I attempted to remove McAfee via the Control Panel's Add/Remove feature, I kept getting error messages that part of the program was running and could not be removed. I did everything I could think of to stop/disable McAfee, but nothing managed to kill it dead. I did a Google search later on and found that usually there is no simple way to get rid of it. A "help" page on the McAfee page

provides pages of procedures to "try," all of them obscure and non-intuitive. An unwanted program that cannot simply be uninstalled is **malware** in my opinion. If Dell is unwilling to sell computers without all the junk, the best solution may be to reformat the hard drive and reinstall the desired programs only. Or choose another vendor. It is hardly an attractive option for new Windows users.

Rant #2 Sony BMG recently got caught using rootkits to provide copy protection on CDs they sold. Rootkits are programs that hide on your hard drive, out of sight of Windows. They are an open invitation for virus writers to invade your system and are hard to remove without damaging Windows. Sony was forced to apologize for its error, recalled the CDs involved, and published a patch to remove the rootkits from the customers' computers.

According to an article in *eweek.com*, the rootkit trick is being used by other companies also <http://snipurl.com/lis7>, thanks to Jim Geiser. Norton SystemWorks is specifically mentioned. Symantec explained that they used the rootkit to prevent users from accidentally removing the file, but offered to relocate it with a program update. According to *eweek.com* there are other instances of rootkits being used, but no specifics were mentioned.

My Norton Internet Security subscription is about to expire. I already had planned to try the ZoneAlarm Security Suite, based on a recommendation in *PC Magazine* (12/27/05) that included it in their list of Best of the Year Products (but that also included McAfee anti-virus!). But then Linda Gonse, editor/webmaster of the Orange County IBM PC Users' Group,

wrote that the ZoneAlarm Security Suite interfered with her ftp program and mangled the files she uploaded to her Web site. She had a dickens of a time trying to uninstall the program. However, she never had a problem with the plain, free ZoneAlarm firewall. I concluded that my best bet was to use free ZoneAlarm as the firewall.

I chose a separate anti-virus program, **F-Prot** from Frisk software <http://www.f-prot.com/products/>. I used that program years ago in the DOS days, and more recently, I have been using it on my Linux computers. Their technical support is outstanding, as I mentioned in a previous column (*P-See Urgent,* December 2005). F-Prot, based in Iceland, was one of the first to spot the rootkits and to provide an uninstallation patch. They update their database as soon as they add new data, usually several times a week. The Windows version costs $29 per year, but a trial version is available to make sure the product fills your needs.

As expected, replacing Norton Internet Security with ZoneAlarm and F-Prot was not without problems. I downloaded the trial version of F-Prot without difficulty and stored it, ready for use. Getting the free version of ZoneAlarm was a different story.
Rant #3 If you make a free, limited version, of your software available for download, don't play silly games trying to hide the download button hoping that the prospective customer will finally give up, or make an error, and order your paid-for version. It may work sometimes, but you lose every last bit of goodwill you may have worked years to earn. Is that worth it? After struggling with ZoneAlarm for 20 minutes trying to download the free program, I simply copied an older setup version that was still on my other Windows computer and installed that. ZoneAlarm then promptly offered to update that version and I was in business. Installation of F-Prot went without a hitch.

Although I had uninstalled Norton Internet Security with the Control Panel–Add/Remove route, it was evidently not quite dead yet. ZoneAlarm started telling me that Norton was still trying to access various parts of my computer, which I blocked. Soon thereafter, everything froze and I got the Blue Screen of Death. It took two cold restarts to get everything back up and running, and my first action was to have ZoneAlarm block everything with the Norton label. That seems to work thus far.

As every successful business, from Wal-Mart to General Electric, knows, your most important asset is customer goodwill. A happy customer is a return customer. Over the years, Dell has built up an excellent reputation for product quality, price, and service. They stand to lose all that for a few bucks they make as "partners" with the likes of McAfee and Quicken Books. It isn't worth it. The same goes for Norton, known since DOS days for its reliability and excellence of technology. Avoid exasperating your customers and they'll keep coming back.

New Hard Drives and XP Hard Drive Management Utility
By Ira Wilsker

With the oft-mentioned convergence, where our desktop computers are now commonly used for more than traditional computing tasks, many of us seem to run low on hard drive space. A quick review of the newspaper and online ads for the electronics and office supply stores often show a selection of large capacity hard drives for very reasonable prices. Sometimes these hard drives can be purchased for an exceptionally low price after the application of high value rebates. Now that many of us are using our hard drives for the storage and editing of video (very large files), countless music files (typically a few megabytes each), and even recording and time shifting TV (huge files), it is quite easy for hard drive space to run short. This is an indication that it is time to somehow utilize an additional hard drive.

The aftermarket hard drives now so readily available come in a variety of packages. Generally, the lowest priced drives are name-brand drives packaged as "OEM" intended for computer builders, and typically lack cables, installation software, instructions, brackets, screws, and other sometimes useful accessories. Commonly available at the retail stores, for slightly more, are drives packed in retail packages which usually include cables, detailed installation instructions, partitioning and formatting software, technical support, brackets, and other paraphernalia. At the top of the price charts, but still sometimes bargain priced, are external drives, already partitioned and formatted, and ready to use by simply plugging one cable into a USB or firewire port, and connecting the traditional power cord, with no other hardware installation. External drives often come with a variety of utility software titles for creating backups, and other purposes. Since there are a variety of hard drive controllers (the device that physically connects the motherboard in the computer to the cable and drive) in use, the purchaser needs to be sure that any internal drives purchased are compatible with the controllers in the computer. Acronyms such as IDE, EIDE, ATA, and SATA are commonly used to describe the interface of the hard drives advertised. If the purchaser is not sure which type is correct, a knowledgeable salesperson or call to the hard drive manufacturer may help the buyer select the correct type.

Installing an additional hard drive in a desktop computer may be easy, and can be done by anyone with moderate mechanical and electrical skills. The retail packs often come with very easy to follow directions (and sometimes even a video!) showing the step-by-step process. Most typically, computers come with two hard drive controllers either built in to the motherboard, or on a separate card; each controller can usually drive two hard drives, or a hard drive and a CD/DVD player or burner, allowing for up to four hard drives and CD/DVD units in any combination without the installation of additional controller hardware. One proviso worth noting here is that if the computer is still covered by warranty, opening the case to install an additional hard drive may void the remaining balance of the

warranty. There is no warranty risk in using an external hard drive since there is no "hard" installation necessary.

Once a new internal hard drive is installed, it must be partitioned and formatted appropriately in order for it to function properly. If a retail pack was purchased, there will likely be a floppy or CD included that contains the necessary utilities; if an OEM drive was purchased, either a third party utility must be used (my favorite is Partition Magic), or a little known XP utility can be used. External drives, unless home built with a separate drive and case, generally do not need any utilities to make them function properly. Fortunately, users of Windows XP have a built-in utility that can be used for the necessary partitioning and formatting of new drives, as well as other hard drive and computer management tasks. Fred Langa, author of the very popular "Langa List" <http://www.langa.com> published a series of articles in early March documenting the availability and utilization of this integral utility. "Administrator" access is necessary to access this utility. While there are several ways to access the utility, one of the easiest ways is to right click on the "My Computer" icon on the desktop, and then click on "Manage". "Disk Management" is listed under the "Storage" heading. From this point, hard drives can be partitioned, formatted, have drive letters designated or changed, and a variety of other hard tasks can be accomplished. It is important to be especially careful not to partition or format existing hard drives with this utility, unless explicitly

desired, as it is likely that existing data on the drive may be destroyed or otherwise become inaccessible. Other non-hard drive management tasks can also be performed from this utility.

If a new hard drive is installed, it will show up as an "unknown" disk. Right-clicking on the new disk will open a menu with "partition" as one of the choices. Selecting this will open a wizard, which will guide the user through the steps of initializing and partitioning the drive, and then formatting it with an appropriate format. After the process is completed, the new drive should show up in Windows Explorer.

Since many of the new hard drives are truly huge in capacity, it may be more convenient in the long run to partition them as if they were several smaller hard drives, each partition with a separate drive letter. This makes disk storage more efficient, with less wasted space, as well as easier to backup, maintain, defragment, and perform other tasks.

A new large capacity hard drive may be useful to improve the utilization of the computer as well as allow it to be used for the many new non-computing tasks that are becoming popular.

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Clear Reading With Cleartype
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My students know why LCD displays are superior to CRT monitors. When one of them complained to me that he found text difficult to read on his new 21 inch LCD Monitor, I told him it was probably because the screen resolution made the text too small to read easily. He didn't think so because his teen-age granddaughter also thought the text wasn't clear. His comment made me think.

Flat panel LCD Monitors are designed to display information at a specific resolution known as the "native resolution." Manufacturers refer to them as "fixed-pixel displays" because they are limited to displaying only one resolution. If they receive an image signal that is either higher or lower than the native resolution, they convert or scale the image automatically to fit the native resolution.

If the incoming source has more pixels than the display's native resolution, you will lose some visible detail and sharpness. Very often, you will need to carefully compare the images side by side to see any difference. Only the most exacting applications will suffer from this small constraint.

If the incoming source has fewer pixels than the native resolution, there is no benefit from the higher resolution. Extra pixels will not improve the appearance of a lower-resolution source.

Converting images from either a higher or lower resolution to the LCD's native resolution hardly affects the quality of graphic or video images, but it can make text appear blurry. Early LCD displays had no ready solution for this problem. All one could do was experiment with various font styles and sizes until an acceptable compromise was reached.

Microsoft didn't want to keep its customers waiting while it found an answer so it licensed TrueType fonts from Apple. The advantage of TrueType fonts was that text could be made larger or smaller with little distortion. Text became easier to read, and Microsoft made some improvements to the technology, but TrueType proved to be an interim response.

While Microsoft was working on Windows XP, it was also developing a new software technology designed to enhance text readability on flat panel LCD monitors, laptops, PDAs, Pocket PCs, indeed any device that used an LCD screen, no matter how big or small.

Microsoft claims that its development people spent two years studying typography and the psychology of reading to create ClearType. Instead of affecting individual pixels, which are either treated as "on" or "off," ClearType works with a different type of pixel that is constructed of three individual pieces tinted with red, blue, and green stripes. The technology varies the brightness of the sub-pixels, making the screen characters appear smooth, clean, and sharp around the edges.

Now that you know what it is, how can you use it? You have three ways to turn on or "enable" ClearType for your LCD display. Let's start with the easiest way.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/Step1.aspx>

Follow the online directions to enable ClearType on your system.

Another way is to download the PowerToy version of the online tuner. This lets you do the same thing that the above procedure does, but you do it by accessing the Control Panel and activating the ClearType settings from there.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypePowerToy.mspx>

Follow the online directions to download, install, and use. It's easy.

Finally, for the propeller heads and bit twiddlers in the audience, you can access the Registry. To enable ClearType for all users of your system:

From the Start button, select Run and type Regedit in the Text box. (As if you didn't know.)

• Navigate to HKEY_USERS/.DEFAULT/Control Panel/Desktop.
• Create or Modify the Data Type and Value Name as detailed below.
• Data Type: String Value
• Value Name: FontSmoothing
• Setting for Value Data: [Set Value to 2]
• Data Type: Dword
• Value Name: FontSmoothingType
• Setting for Value Data: [Change Value to 2]
• Exit Registry and Reboot

Enabling ClearType only for the current user instead of all users is identical to the above procedure except that instead of HKEY_USERS, work

with HKEY_CURRENT_USER instead.

When you're finished, check the Desktop and examine the icon titles. Open the Start menu while you're at it and observe the readability of the text. You may find the text too small to read even though it is sharp and clear. If this is the case:

• Right click on the Desktop
• Choose Properties from the popup menu.
• Clock the Appearance tab.
• Click the Advanced button and make changes there.

Decide which technique is best for you, and enjoy text that is clear, crisp and sharp.

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.

Why Settle, Do It Your Way
by Lee Alexander
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Icons
You can make your PC more colorful and distinguish folders by using icons other than the ubiquitous manila folder. Right-click a folder and select properties; under the Customize tab, click the Change icon button and you will see more than 250 icons to choose from. Actually, the file, Shell32.dll,

contains 1484 icons on my system. A good many of these are duplicates in different sizes and color depths. Sizes range from 16 x 16 pixels through 96 x 96 pixels; color depths can be 16, 256, or True colors (24-bit for a range of 16,777,216 hues).

Using one of my favorite free utilities, IrfanView, you can view and do minor editing such as changing size, color depth, and rotating the image.

TIP: Open an IrfanView window and Drag the file Shell32.dll into it. You can then see previews of the icons, one by one. If you want to do extensive editing of folder icons, create a shortcut to shell32.dll on your desktop. Then right-click on it and choose "Open With" - Irfanview.

I have created an Excel spreadsheet with a brief description of about 100 selected icons—Shell32Icons.xls.

Acrobat Reader

This free utility is much in demand of late as many program manuals are now written in the .PDF (Portable Document Format) format. A few handy keyboard shortcuts are:

• Adobe uses <Ctrl> L (instead of F11 as in Microsoft products) to toggle full screen view.
• Toggle the toolbars with F8.
• Use the right/left arrow keys to advance/go back a page.

Adobe Photoshop, Etc.

You can hide the floating palettes in Adobe products (such as Elements), by hitting the <Tab> key. It is a toggle; hit it again to bring them back.

Word Toolbars

You can create a toolbar button for easily inserting a symbol into a document. Right-click a toolbar and select Customize and the Commands tab. In the categories pane scroll down and click on All Commands . In the right pane, Commands, click on Symbol: and drag it to a toolbar. This will open the Symbol dialog box. Click the symbol to be attached to the button and click OK.

The toolbar button now displays the font name (Symbol) followed by the symbol number. Since this is not very friendly information, we can change the button's appearance. With the Customize dialog box opened, right-click the button and choose "Name:". To make the button resemble the symbol it's attached to, use the <Alt> key and the four digits on the number pad for that symbol. You can add a graphic to the button by clicking on Edit Button Image. You're then presented with a simple grid and color palette upon which you can draw simple shapes.

Tips on Digital Photography and a PC Windows Picture and Fax Viewer

This versatile (for photos) utility is often overlooked in the availability of photo editors. As it is included with the Windows Operating System, it is a "freebie" readily at hand. Typically, unless you have set file associations otherwise, double clicking on a photo will open it in the Viewer. The toolbar at the bottom has some handy features that are not immediately intuitive. The Previous and Next buttons allow you to view all the images in the folder of the first photo you selected. The Screen icon will start an automatic slide show; the Zoom, Rotation, and Delete are self-explanatory. However, the Print icon can surprise you—it opens the Photo Printing Wizard. As you step through the Wizard, the Layout Selection provides a variety of print configurations from 8.5 x 11 to a 35 print "contact sheet."

If you have set a file association to open your photos in an editor, you can create a shortcut to the Picture and Fax Viewer on your Desktop or in the Quick Launch Tray. Right-click in the area you want the shortcut and choose New | Shortcut. In the Shortcut wizard, enter "C:\Windows\system32\shimgvw.dll" (assuming your Operating System is on the C: drive). Name the shortcut and click Finish. On the first use, you will have to choose the program, Picture and Fax Viewer, and check the box to "Always use selected program…"

Note that if you right-click and choose Edit, you will open the Paint program. The next-to-last button closes the viewer and opens the photo-editing program associated with the file type.

Harrys Filters

Harry's Filters 3.0 is a Photoshop-compatible plug-in, which can be used in dozens of different image editing applications, e.g. Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, Corel Photo-Paint and many others. It includes 69 effect filters, an Animation feature, options for saving and opening presets and an instant preview feature.

Harry's Filters 3.0 is freeware. You can use them for whatever you like, but you aren't allowed to distribute them without the author's permission.

Be sure to read the instructions about extracting the zipped file to the folder containing your photo editor.

At this point, the website link I had entered is no longer valid. This brings up a salient point—rather than hold on to old links (the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web is in constant flux, always changing) it is better to Google the topic or subject to get the latest information.

LCD Usage with a Digital Camera

The disadvantage of using the LCD, as opposed to the optical viewfinder, the camera is not braced against a body part (your head). It is difficult to avoid camera shake when the camera is held at arms length. Try tucking your elbows into your sides and exhale before pressing the shutter release—don't punch it.

Flash as a fill-in

Using flash as a fill-in in outdoor shots, such as when the subject is backlit can reduce the shutter speed. If your camera has the ability, check the shutter speed and aperture after such a shot. When flash is forced, digital cameras typically compensate by lowering the shutter speed and/or increasing the aperture.

White Balance

If your photos have an overall color cast, it could be a function of the White Balance. In a photo editor, find a patch of near-neutral gray and check the RGB color levels. They should be nearly equal in value. A free utility, Pixie, can check this for you. You can download the program from <http://www.nattyware.com>.

Color Management Schemes

Color schemes can conflict, if you use more than one of them. Select the color profile of either the printer or the photo editing software, not both. With inkjets, a greenish tone could indicate that no color scheme has been applied; a reddish hue may indicate two color schemes have been applied.

See More Thumbnails in Windows Explorer

Hold down the <Shift> key when selecting the Thumbnail view to eliminate file labels = more pics per screen.

Auto-reduce Photo File Sizes

Windows XP has a neat feature to adjust the file size of photos for transmission over the Internet. Select the photo(s) and right-click on one. From the pop-up menu, choose Send to and Mail Recipient. This will bring up a dialog box, Send Pictures via E-Mail. The radio button Make all my pictures smaller is selected by default. Click on Show more options to see 3 degrees of reduction.

Although it creates a message with the reduced file size photos as attachments, you do not have to send the message. You can right-click on an attachment and from the pop-up menu select Save As… or Copy to put it on the Clipboard. You then simply delete the message without sending it.

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.

Do I Have to Overwrite My Hard Drive Multiple Times?
By Stephen Elderkin, President
WhiteCanyon, Inc.
www.whitecanyon.com

There are multiple standards for wiping drives, and each one recommends a certain number of hard-drive overwrites. How many times do you really need to overwrite your drive in order to keep your personal information from falling into the wrong hands?

Computer forensics expert Stephen Elderkin explains below how overwriting drives makes data unusable and how many times you need to overwrite your drive in order to prevent identity theft.

How Many Times Do You Need to Overwrite Your Data Before It Is Truly Erased?

Many people have asked questions such as "Why do programs like WipeDrive have so many options for overwriting the hard drive of a computer?" "Why is there not just one way of wiping the data?" and "Which option is right for my circumstances?"

Unfortunately, a quick search of the Internet on these topics will only make you more confused because very few people have written about them correctly. Many of the articles you would find say to destroy your hard drive with a hammer because there is no safe way to completely erase the information stored on it. This myth is absolutely false.

Why Are There Multiple Overwriting Standards?

The main reason there are so many overwriting standards is because computers change at a rapid pace. Almost all of the standards were written by government agencies as a means of sanitizing unclassified drives. However, what most people forget to take into account is that old standards were written based on the specifications of old hardware. A 10 megabyte drive from the early 1980s has a very different architecture than a modern 120 gigabyte drive.

How Have Hard Drives Changed Over the Years?

One of the reasons hard drives had such small capacities several years ago

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is that the write and read heads of those drives were not very accurate. You could say they wobbled. The read and write heads are similar to the needle of a record player. A hard drive is composed of platters or disks, and each disk has a head that can read and write to the disk. As you can guess, the more the disk head wobbles, the less exact it will be. Modern drives have less wobble and can more accurately access the disk. This allows modern drives to have a much larger capacity than older drives by fitting more data into the same amount of space.

A Close-up View of a Hard Drive

Drives store data on disks using magnetic imprints that represent 1s and 0s. Figure 1 below shows what a bit would look like under an electron microscope. Notice that we can see three imprints of three different bits written to the disk in this example. Two bits were from a previous write while the large square represents the most recent bit written to this location. You can see that it is possible to read the data from a previous file stored on the drive by looking at the small amounts of magnetic charge left around the edges from previous writes.

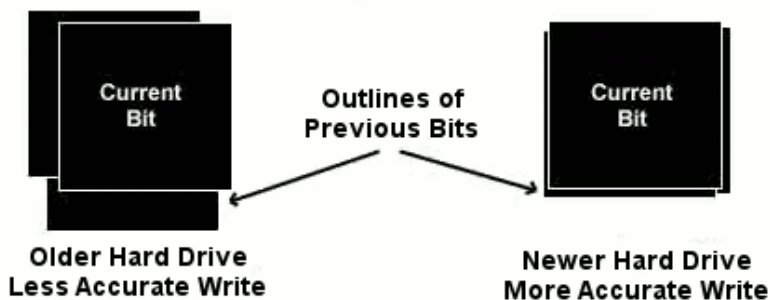**How Would Someone Access Old Data from My Hard Drive?**

Some people believe that with an electron microscope, advanced statistics, and special programming skills, you would be able to recover old data that has been overwritten. Even with these specialized and powerful tools, however, data recovery is so difficult that it can be called impossible; remember, we are looking at bits. There are millions and billions of them on a disk. It would take years to recover enough bits to begin looking for data, and even then, you would not know which old bit imprints go with other old imprints. Looking at each of the possible combinations for billions of bits is a task so difficult that it can be called impossible.

The newer the drive, the less wobble there is in the disk heads and the less chance there is of having any residual bit data to look at. This means the chances of recovering previously overwritten data on a newer drive are even lower.

How Do I Prevent People from Looking at My Old Data?

To erase data on a drive, programs like WipeDrive overwrite each bit on the drive with junk data. The junk data bit replaces the magnetic imprint of the

Figure 1

Current Bit

Outlines of Previous Bits

Current Bit

Older Hard Drive
Less Accurate Write

Newer Hard Drive
More Accurate Write

previous bit, thus erasing it. Because drive heads wobble, it makes sense to overwrite the data on the drive more than one time because the drive head is going to track differently for different writes. The older the drive, the more writes are needed to ensure that the old data has been replaced by junk data. The newer the drive, the fewer passes are needed.

How Many Overwrites Do I Need?
So how many overwrite passes do you need? One. Data is so incredibly difficult to recover after being overwritten that even people with electron microscopes, advanced statistical tools, and specialized programming skills are not going to be able to recover data from your drive. It just isn't going to happen. You can search the Internet for examples where overwritten data were recovered and you will not find even one event where

a person recovered more than a couple of bits of a byte.

So, the paranoid can rest easy. They can follow the Department of Defense standards to help them sleep better at night, but one overwrite is enough to protect your data from being recovered.

Can you safely donate or sell an old computer without the risk of having your data stolen? The answer is yes if you use a program like WipeDrive to completely erase the computer before you let it leave your possession.

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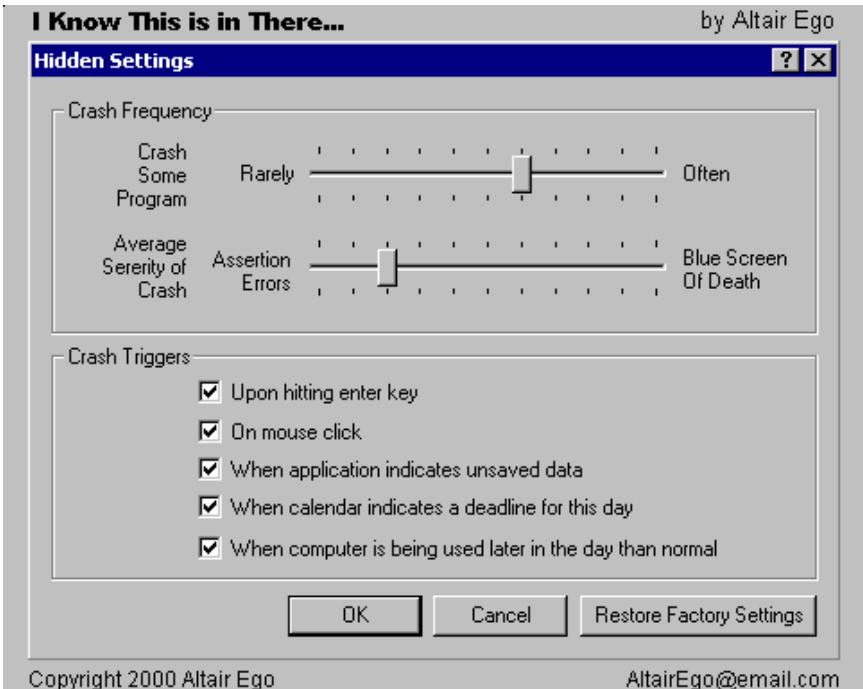
BOARD MEETING
03/12/2006
Carol Sanzi

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairmen Tom Callow and Warner Mach, SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Carl Massie, and Member-at-Large Bob Clyne. Also attending were Chuck Morey and Thomas McNorton. Arriving late were Paul Cervero and Chester Blechinger, Member-at-Large. The meeting was called to order at 12:08 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Bette Gay reported that there is now $7,431.19 in the treasury. The membership stands at 79. It is time for David R. Smikle, Harold Langberg D.D.S., Warner Mach, Randy Mims, and John Samarian to renew their memberships. Tom Callow moved to reimburse Warner Mach $22.15 for refreshments. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried. Tom Callow moved to include Bill Edwards on the DATA BUS mailing list. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Richard Jackson mailed the invitations to the 30th Anniversary meeting to those whose membership has expired within the past five years. Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Richard Jackson $39 for postage stamps. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion and it was carried.

In preparation for the 30th Anniversary, Warner Mach and Richard Jackson are locating past members to be on a panel to discuss technology, past and present. Steve Yuhasz plans to show movie clips of past anniversaries. A request was made for members to bring older computer equipment for display. Carol Sanzi sent out press releases to many local newspapers. She is also gathering an assortment of door prizes. Bob Clyne moved to increase the Anniversary budget by $100. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Since Al Bochenek, Publications Committee Chairman and DATA BUS editor has resigned, Bob Clyne offered to publish the April edition in his absence. Tom McNorton agreed to be a short-term editor until one is found. Carl Massie suggested that the job of editor could be explained at the general meeting to inform members of what is expected. Hopefully, this will encourage a volunteer to offer their services. Bob Clyne agreed to give a brief explanation.

Bob Clyne moved that the draft budget presented be adopted with one change. The monies in the Administrative account should be changed from $300 to $400. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

A discussion was held as to the activity on the SEMCO telephone line. It costs about $20 a month to maintain. It was decided that the recorded message needs to be updated monthly, giving the meeting topics.

Tom Callow moved to adjourn. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

March Meeting Attendance: 29

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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Carl Massie, Jr.

SIG-IBM and SIG-IBM Intermediate will not meet in April.
The next meetings will be May 12: Topics: To be announced.

SEMCO 30th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, April 9, 2006 at 1:30 PM

1:30 PM to 2:45 PM: Master of Ceremonies, former SEMCO President, Jim Rarus: "30 Years of Personal Computing—a Look Back at People and Events," includes slides. Also, snippets of 25th Anniversary Video provided by Steve Yuhasz.

Doorprize Drawing

2:45 PM to 3:45 PM: Refreshments and Antique Computer Display

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM: Steve Yuhasz, former SEMCO President, will moderate a Panel Discussion: "Computer Technology: What has improved and what has gotten worse over the past 30 years."

All times are approximate!

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

Novice-IBM Group will not meet in April.
SEMCO 30th Anniversary Celebration.
The next meeting will be May 14: Help And Q & A: Discussion directed by the audience. No question is too simple!!

May 1, 2006: (First Monday), 6:45 pm, at the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. **Topic: Wide ranging discussion of computers and computing.**

May 2006 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., April 16, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <clyne@lodden.com>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact the Editor (address Page 2).

Tom McNorton
mcnortontl@ameritech.net
(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

AAIICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)
April 29–Saturday, 10am; W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd., 1mile west of Orchard Lk Rd. Jack Lockman at <thunder@tir.com   or 313-341-8855.

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)
May 3–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin Building, center meeting room. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <http://www.bwcomp.org>.

DCOM Computer Club
April 14–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.

FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)
April 11–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817 (enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn.org/FACE/>.

MacGroup Detroit
April 23–Sunday, 3pm–5pm; Birmingham Temple, 28611 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: Adobe Photoshop Elements 4.0.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
April 15–Saturday (3rd Saturday); 11:00 am main meeting (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <http://www.mactechnics.org>). Cassie at <cassiemac@yahoo.com> or 313-971-8743.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group
April 13–(2nd Thur) 7:30pm, General meeting; Fraternal 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)
May 2–Tuesday 7:30pm, (1st Tuesday); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel at <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http:/www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. Topic: TBD

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
April 8–Saturday, 12:30–2:30pm, (2nd Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <http://www.mdlug.org>. Info: Richard Jackson 248-546-3694.

Wayne State U. Mac User Group
April 8–Saturday, 10:00am–Noon (2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny MeLampy 248-477-0190.

Visit the SEMCO website
<http://www.semco.org>

Meeting information is posted there before you receive your DATA BUS and any changes will be posted there. The "Hot Links" page contains links to many other sites which have still more useful information. (If you have any suggestions for additional links for this page, let us know.) Information about the Board members is posted in the Board Members page. The DATA BUS is also posted on our website in PDF format and the links are "live" so you can just click on them instead of typing them into your browser. Some of the material is in color.

There is more, check it out!

JANUARY REFRESHMENT DONORS
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Bette Gay
Betty MacKenzie
Roland Maki
Carol Sanzi

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

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm .... mbader@flash.net
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm .... clyne@lodden.com
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm .... tcallow@monaghanpc.com
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime .... jerrycandotoo@juno.com
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves .... scook48227@ameritech.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720,12–8pm .... jvanders@myself.com
Yuhasz, Steve .... Help@yuhasz.org

SEMCO CALENDAR—April
ArvinMeritor Building
2135 West Maple Road
Troy, Michigan

April 9–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO 30th Anniversary Celebration

1:30 PM to 2:45 PM: Master of Ceremonies, former SEMCO President, Jim Rarus: "30 Years of Personal Computing—a Look Back at People and Events," includes slides. Also, snippets of 25th Anniversary Video provided by Steve Yuhasz.

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All times are approximate!

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM, NOVICE-IBM GROUP, and SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE: Will not meet in April.

SIG-ADVANCED , **May 1, 2006–MONDAY, 6:45 pm,** (First Monday), 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.**
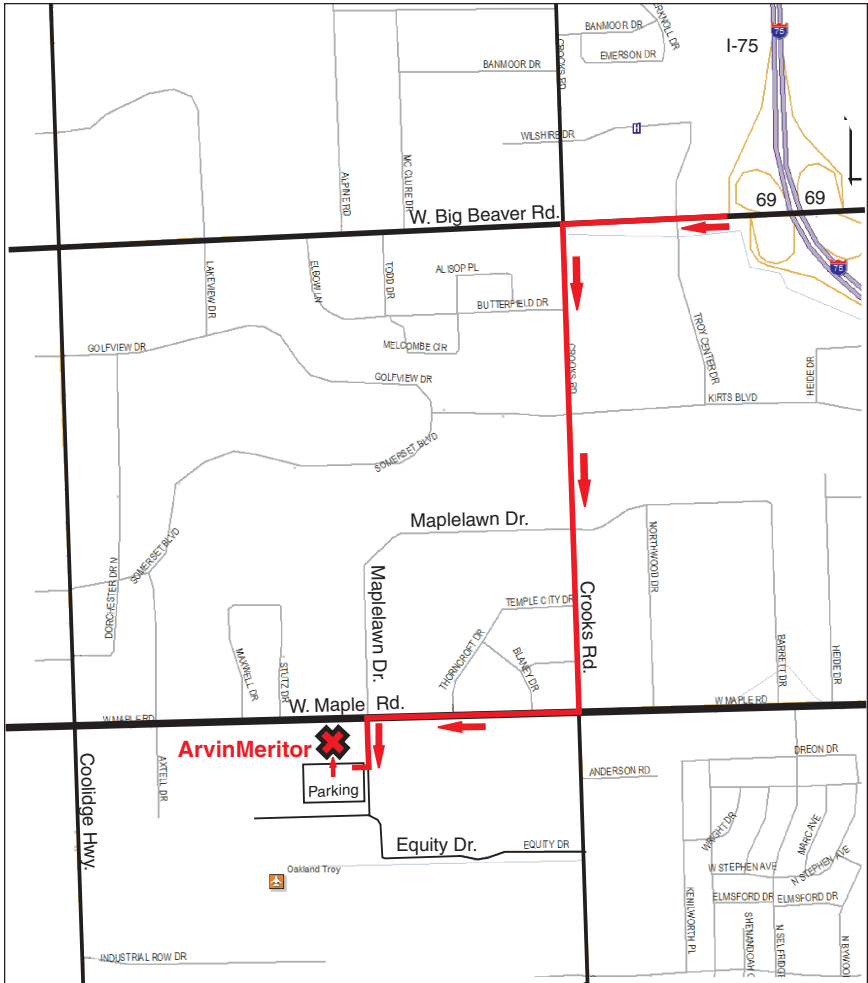
May 14–SEMCO SUNDAY

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 Maplelawn 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.

apcug

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
   April 9
   May 14

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