SEMCO

Official Newsletter

SouthEastern Michigan

Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

MEETING
June 11

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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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which was donated by Adobe Systems, Inc.

I worked the National Sign Association show and it was interesting. Most of the outdoor electronic signs were using very bright LEDs that are easily seen, even in bright sunlight. The LED's brightness can be adjusted either automatically or manually. The one I saw up close was composed of modules 19 inches square that can be easily changed to repair it. If a hurricane is approaching it is easy to dismantle the modules and safely store them (if your storage survives). It was a large show. There were many types of giant printers, and other machines that would stamp out all kinds of parts for signs.

Memphis PC Users Group Inc. has a great newsletter thanks to the Editor Jin Yang. An interesting article in the January 2006 issue caught my eye called "A Letter from China," by Judith Bogan, working in Shanghai, China. There are other interesting articles, but look for that issue on their newsletter archive page. <http://www.mpcug.org>

I have developed other health problems (numbing toes among other things), but I have a lot packed in the column for you this month so you don't need my health problems. I edited much of the wording out so I suggest you check for more product information on the Web sites. Remember I have not tried them and know nothing about these products but thought they were interesting. Be sure to check their privacy statements, if they have one. Also, I need more opinions on my using these announcements in the column.

Games Anyone?
TameStorm Games unveiled the newest version of 'Filler.' The inner structure of the game reveals features of puzzles and strategies combined, so they have a few games to put on the same list.

What you are to do here is to occupy half, or the majority of, the flowers on the field. The field is a meticulously crafted meadow picture, in which flowers are fresh and live and their petals still remember the touch of an artist's brush. You always start a game from the left side. The computer always starts from the right one. You always make the first move. The game field has flowers with coins, which you need to seize. The more coins you have, the more bonuses you can buy. If you have gathered enough money, you can repaint flowers in the color of your zone. If you randomize unoccupied space, you can make your opponent miss one or more turns. Two modes of the game are available: classic puzzle and advanced puzzle. In advanced puzzle mode you will see black flowers that you can't seize.

Filler Features at a Glance (Full Version):
• Unlimited game play time
• 100 layouts of the field
• 100 levels in advanced game
• 100 levels in classic game
• 11 special bonuses
• Interesting game for your children
• Graphics designed by masters of Russian Khokhloma painting
• Splendid relaxing game.

Pricing and Availability
Filler 1.2 runs under Windows98/ME/2000/XP and costs $14.95 (USD). TameStorm Games offers user group members a 15% discount. Use the coupon code TAME-HQBL-FILL on

the order page. Additional information on Filler, as well as its evaluation version with 30 minutes of the game play and several locked levels is available as a free download at: <http://www.tamestorm.com/games/filler_puzzle_game/filler_demo_setup.ex >.

Product page link: <http://www.tamestorm.com/games/filler_puzzle_game>.

Web:<http://www.tamestorm.com>

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Smart eBook Maker for Richer Content and Stronger Copyright Protection eBook Maestro released an update to its fully featured e-book compiler eBook Maestro 1.50. eBook Maestro is a robust compiler that makes rich standalone e-books out of HTML pages, multimedia files and scripts. The program now supports all popular multimedia formats and helps embed flash, shockwave, and other visual elements into a single executable. eBook Maestro offers various means of content protection from disabling cut-and-paste and printout to on-line registration and limited use for unregistered copies. In response to copyright concerns, we provide multi-level protection of e-book contents. Not only can you effectively limit the use of a publication, but also protect its content against changes. Besides making e-books, it provides rich features for multimedia presentations, ezines, offline web sites, training and educational courses, advertisement and promotion letters, and other kinds of publications.

Pricing and Availability

eBook Maestro v1.50 runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP. A standard version of the product is available at $35.95 USD for a single user license. A professional version with extended support for commercial e-publishing is priced at $69.95 USD for the same single user license. eBook Maestro with core functionality is also available as a freeware. eBook Maestro STANDARD and eBook Maestro PRO are offered at a 40% discount. Discount coupon "C2044NN1449" is redeemable at <http://www.ebookmaestro.com/purchase_discount.html>.

The trial versions of eBook Maestro STANDARD and eBook Maestro PRO, and the freeware version of eBook Maestro FREE are available for download at <http://www.ebookmaestro.com/download.html>.

Product page link: <http://www.ebookmaestro.com>.

Get Rid of Those Duplicate Files

We are the producer of NoClone, a file utility which uncovers true duplicate files and recovers valuable disk space. Reasonable Software House is offering a 20% discount to user group members on NoClone, a file utility which uncovers true duplicate files and recovers valuable disk space. To get the discount, follow this link: <http://noclone.net/mybuy.asp?promo=HF89AW>. Don't buy a new hard drive, buy NoClone. Uncover duplicate files; recover valuable disk space. Information at <http://noclone.net>.

Reasonable Software House (a Monthly Service)

An online permission-based newsletter management system called Reasonable Spread, also from Reasonable Software House, can help with your newsletter management. By using Reasonable

Spread, you can communicate with your members by sending newsletter/latest news/announcements. Or it can be used as an electronic publishing tool by sending users news and articles written by the group president or members.

For the free trial: <http://spread.reasonablesw.com>.

To order at 20% discount: <http://spread.reasonablesw.com/mypages/discounts-20.aspx>

• Phone: +852 35204490 Fax: +852 35204492
• Mobile: +852 92276779.
• Address: Suite 332, InnoCentre, 72 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong.

More Product Announcements

Almeza Research has released MultiSet 2.0 and Captain Tray 6.0. MultiSet is a solution to the problem of automatic program installation. MultiSet has been created to free you from routine work such as program installations. All you have to do is install the application once on your PC, and MultiSet will record all your actions. MultiSet will install all the applications you need automatically, either on your original computer or on a new one; it's ideal for rebuilding your systems quickly!

MultiSet automatically starts the installation procedure, takes care of all necessary buttons, like "Next," "I agree," and "Finish." This installation robot will specify the path for the installation and automatically configure all attending settings. All registration codes and license keys will also be entered in a self-acting mode. Once you have done it, you can playback the whole process and create your installation CD/DVD disc!

Website and Info: <http://www.almeza.com/>. Get 50% discount

(MSRP $44.95, although I am unsure about that MSRP) <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-1&ss_coupon=ALME-XEH >.

Captain Tray Pro

Turn system tray into your PC central command center.

Captain Tray Pro is a tiny software application that makes a difference when it comes to organizing favorite programs, customizing the system tray and creating shortcuts for instantaneously minimizing windows, changing captions and doing a number of other tasks. Essentially, any user who invests an hour into investigating this tool is likely to completely abandon the traditional way of endless window browsing and using the Start menu to open documents and launch applications.

Many users need several applications running simultaneously. Some of those applications are used quite frequently, others only when they are needed. So the Windows taskbar can get fully packed and everything seems to be necessary, and you have no desire to close any programs. Some applications can be minimized to the system tray, but what shall we do about "Notepad," "Calculator," "Microsoft Word," "Microsoft Excel," and our other favorite programs? Captain Tray Pro is there to help you. Here are two other products with a discount.

Program: Captain Tray Pro

Website and Info: <http://www.captaintray.com>.

50% discount URL: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-2&ss_coupon=ALME-XEH >.

Program: Time Assist Pro (A project manager)

Web: <http://www.mytimeassist.com>. 50% Discount link: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-4&ss_coupon=ALME-XEH >

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check for 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>.

WJR SEMCO Podcast

The podcasts of Steve Yuhsz and Carl Massie Jr. on News/Talk 760 WJR Radio's Internet Advisor broadcast on April 22, 2006 are now available on SEMCO's web site. These files are in MP3 format and cover the entire 2-hour broadcast on which Steve and Carl were heard.

If you are using a dialup connection, we recommend that you download the files before trying to listen to them rather than trying to listen to them directly from our Web site. If you are using Internet Explorer, right-click on the link and select Save Target As… and save the file to a location on your computer where you can find it later. Use Windows Media Player or your favorite audio player to listen to the MP3 files.

British Government Promotes CyberSafety for All
By Ira Wilsker

We can learn a lot from others. Would it not be great if our government sent us timely warnings about cyber security risks, and provided us with frequent tips about what we can do to secure our computers from virus or hacker attack? The British government has set up a program, ITsafe, "IT Security Awareness For Everyone" at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk>. This service has been online for over a year, and is intended to, "…provide both home users and small businesses with advice in plain English on protecting computers, mobile phones and other devices from malicious attack." Using a website designed for low-bandwidth connections, and an e-mail alert service warning of serious computing and other technological risks, this service can provide users anywhere, including in the U.S., with valuable and free information. A plain English dictionary, free of geek-speak, can explain technical terms used.

ITsafe gets its information from a British government agency, the National Infrastructure Security Coordination Centre (NISCC), news and other public resources, and corporate participants all over the world. The information is compiled and distributed by a small staff which is funded by the British Home Office.

The information provided by ITsafe is predominately geared towards PC's running Windows 98 or later, but is also starting to cover security and safety issues facing Mac users, as well as PDA's and cell phones utilizing

WinCE (Windows for Pocket PC), Palm, and Symbian operating systems. In the future, ITsafe will be adding coverage for other types of net connected appliances including digital TV, video computer games (such as Xbox360 and Play Stations), and Internet connected household appliances (such as refrigerators, microwave ovens, and other so-called "white goods").

One of the valuable and useful free benefits of ITsafe is the periodic e-mails containing warnings and other practical information on cyber safety and security. The e-mails can be selectively subscribed to by category or type in order to customize the information received. The "Alert" is an e-mail, or text message sent to capable mobile phones, warning about critical risks and other high priority issues facing computer and technology users. "Bulletins" are e-mails sent warning about other major risks, a degree lower than an alert. For those not desiring periodic e-mails, but preferring a monthly digest of computer safety news there is "ITsafe News" which includes the advisories e-mailed previously, as well as other security tips and information. In order to verify the source of any communications from ITsafe, and ensure the recipient that the information is indeed from an official source, and not from a phony, the user is instructed to register a pass phrase which will be used in the title line of any legitimate message sent, verifying the source as authentic. It should be noted that these free e-mail services are not just for British subjects, but for anyone, including residents of the U.S. I have been subscribing to these services since their inception, and have found them to be a very valuable resource.

Some of the recent bulletins sent by ITsafe cover a variety of safety issues with Microsoft Outlook, Windows, Java, Internet Explorer, Windows Media Player, and other products. Each bulletin also includes information on remedying the problem presented, most often an update from the software publisher.

As has been oft stated in this column, there are several tasks that all computer users should accomplish in order to secure their computers. ITsafe lists seven such tasks at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/howto/7-point-guide.html>, which should be familiar to readers of this column, but are still worth repeating.

The list as presented by ITsafe is:
- Have up-to-date AV Software
- Use a Personal Firewall
- Make sure you system is kept "patched" (updated) regularly
- Use a strong password
- Treat links and attachments with caution
- Be on the lookout for scams
- Use the ITsafe website and warning service

Detailed information on the above topics, including a printable page complete with detailed but "plain English" explanations of the above topics is available at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/howto/7-point-guide-print.html>. If everyone followed these seven points, our computing would be much more secure, and we would not have to devote as much effort in cleaning up the damage that can occur from failing to follow these tips.

ITsafe also has an online library that does not require a nerd as a translator. The library contains information compiled by the staff and includes "ITsafe Snippets" which are current news stories relevant to computer security and safety, past alerts, advisories, and bulletins, and all past and current editions of the ITsafe Newsletter. In another section of the library, complicated security issues are explained in plain English, a feature almost unique on the web.

E-mail has become a significant tool to threaten our cyber safety. ITsafe has published a single page with the high points of e-mail safety at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/library/explain/email-printout.html>. These tips, if followed, could provide the user with substantial safety when using e-mail.

The U.S. government has many websites available with this information. One is <http://www.cybercrime.gov>, where resources are explicitly available for parents, teachers, law enforcement, and others, and has a variety of decent resources, but not of the type available from the British ITsafe program. About the closest the U.S. government gets to ITsafe is the annual cybersecurity day promoted by a joint government-private partnership at <http://staysafeonline.info>. Staysafeonline.info has comprehensive resources on computer safety, as well as lists of tips and hints comparable to ITsafe, but lacks the e-mail alert service, as well as the periodic newsletters.

We all can learn a lot from ITsafe and other resources. The information is readily available and must be followed. The British government is to be commended on the ITsafe program; it would be nice if the U.S. government would follow suit.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.itsafe.gov.uk>
<http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/howto/7-point-guide.html>
<http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/library/explain/email-printout.html>
<http://staysafeonline.info> (US)
<http://www.cybercrime.gov> (US)

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The Future of Broadband Access
By Bob Hewitt
Editor, The Journal of
The Computer Club, Inc.
Sun City Center, Florida

This may end up to be a case of who gets there fastest with the mostest. The goal is Broadband. Just about all computer owners want it. Many cannot afford it. But every provider wants to get the biggest share of the pie.

The telecommunications industry was in the driver's seat first with dial-up. Then came cable as a carrier and telecom countered with DSL. Up rose Wi-Fi, Broadband Wireless Mesh, and finally BPL (Broadband over Power Line).

Pew Internet and American Life Project released a survey finding that about 55 per cent of Internet-using Americans enjoy a broadband connection at home or at work.

Since computers have overwhelmed the marketplace, it may be somewhat misleading to lump them together.

The goal of computer mavens is the most speed per dollar expressed in Kbps (Kilobits per second), Mbps (Megabits per second), or preferably MBps (Megabytes per second). The latter conforms to the standard measurement of file size and gives an operator an instant impression of the time involved in achieving a download or a transfer, depending on the speed of his CPU or Internet connection.

Because their infrastructure was already in place, the telephone and cable industries became the leaders in delivering Internet resources to their subscribers at $10 to $50 per month depending on speed. But then came the advent of wireless transmission, commonly called Wi-Fi, with its short range signal providing access principally to portable (laptop) PC's—a significant advantage to travelers who were charged a small amount for access.

Almost paralleling the transition from fixed telephone to cell phone, Wi-Fi evolved into wireless mesh Internet which has sparked a huge demand for municipal wireless broadband. Fifty four localities, including major cities, are in the process of establishing or already have established such services.

Tempe, Arizona established a wireless access network last November, covering 40 square miles, with an access cost of $30 a month per subscriber or $3.95 per hour.

Manassas, Virginia became the first citywide Broadband-Over-Powerline site last October when it opened a 10 square mile site available to all at $29 per month.

Philadelphia has contracted with Earthlink to cover its 135 square miles with wireless Internet service—the cost to Earthlink an estimated 10-million dollars and a cost to residents an estimated $20 per month for service. It's assumed that Earthlink will amortize its investment by income from advertising.

The excitement over wireless broadband is heightened by a comparison of download speeds available. The fastest of the three Wi-Fi formats now in use (the 802.11g) is 54 Mbps (megabits per second) or 7 Megabytes per second which is 18 times faster than the cable modems of today. Further is the recent approval by the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) of the new 802.11n Wi-Fi format which may be two years before activation but could achieve data transmission speeds of 600 Mbps; an almost incomprehensible 75 Megabytes per second—200 times today's cable modem speed. At that rate, one could download 80 minutes of music in 10 seconds or an entire opera in 30.

The wired communications industries are not unaware. Witness the fact that they have spent millions of dollars lobbying state legislatures to kill off community Internet. Over the past few years, no less than 14 states have enacted legislation that bans or places limits on municipalities from building community Internet projects. Florida Governor Jeb Bush signed a law last June that prevents cities from offering broadband if there are competing private services.

There are anti-competitive issues at the federal level, also. Republican Representative Pete Sessions of Texas introduced an anti-community Internet bill which would prevent any city in the country from providing Internet

access if a private company offers Internet services nearby—even if the private company serves as little as 10 per cent of the residents.

Republican Senator John Ensign of Nevada introduced the Broadband Investment and Consumer Choice Act which would severely hamper cities' ability to build and manage wireless networks. In response to Ensign's bill, Republican Senator John McCain and Democrat Frank Lautenburg introduced legislation that gives municipalities free rein to offer broadband and would overturn state laws banning such activities.

Now that President Bush has lent his support to a broad set of proposals to get every corner of the country access to broadband connectivity by 2007, it will be interesting to watch both sides welcome that goal as supporting their particular positions. The big question for the public is cost. There have been no definitive publicly-available figures on installation and maintenance of the cutting-edge WiFi mesh application.

Jupiter Research has estimated that the average cost of building and maintaining a wireless network is $150,000 per square mile over five years. Bert Williams, vice president of marketing for Tropos Networks, which has successfully provided mesh based WiFi hardware in several locations around the world, says, "We usually talk in terms of $75,000 per square mile for our gear." Adding the ongoing costs for backhaul and system management, he believes the total to be closer to $100,000 per square mile, while Sky Pilot Networks quotes $50,000.

A long and vigorous battle is ahead involving the established vs the un-established. But one thing is certain. Everyone is going to end up with a piece of the pie. For this is still early in the digital age and there is plenty to go around.

<http://muniwireless.com>
<http://informationweek.com>
<http://www.zdnet.com>
<http://www.vnunet.com>
<http://www.jupitermedia.com>
<http://arstechnica.com>
<http://eetimes.com>
<http://www.mercurynews.com>
<http://slate.com>
<http://eweek.com>
<http://mistershape.com>
S. Derek Turner

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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.

Microsoft Word AutoCorrect

Have you ever had Microsoft Word's AutoCorrect be a little too helpful, and "correct" something you didn't want changed? If you just want to restore what it changed to what you had, just click Undo or press Ctrl-Z. That will reverse the AutoCorrect change for this particular instance only, without changing anything else.

If you want to disable the "correction" permanently, go to Tools | AutoCorrect… and delete the specific item or disable some or all of the AutoCorrect categories.

Swissbit—Victorinox
Do Everything USB, MP3
Swiss Army Knife
By Ira Wilsker

Hey dads! With Father's Day fast approaching, maybe you should get copies of this article, and leave the copies at strategic places around the house where key members of the family are likely to see them. Dads are often hard to buy gifts for, and all too often end up with that ubiquitous neck tie that typically works its way into the back of the closet, and eventually accidentally falls into the bag headed for the rummage sale. Maybe instead of the well intended, but often useless gift that we dads sometimes receive, perhaps a really fun high tech gift would be more appropriate.

USB Swiss Army Knife

The most intriguing item that I have seen, that would make a fantastic gift for dad on his special day, is a combination Victorinox Swiss Army Knife, USB flash drive, FM stereo radio, voice recorder, and remote control MP3 player, manufactured and distributed by Swissbit <http://www.swissbit.com>. Named the "S.Beat," this device is true to the multi-function traditions of the classical Swiss army knife, but with a modern twist. Externally, it looks like an aluminum scaled Swiss army knife, complete with the white cross logo, sharp knife blade, spring opening scissors, and nail file. Internally, it contains a removable USB 2.0 high speed flash drive (available in 1 GB, 2 GB, and 4 GB capacities) that also contains an MP3 player, FM stereo radio, voice recorder, and rechargeable lithium polymer battery. A separate remote control also bears the trademarked Victorinox white cross logo, and contains an earphone jack, volume and track controls, and power on and off. The remote control can be worn around the neck with the included lanyard. For international travelers, the built-in lithium polymer battery can be recharged using the included "USB World Charger", which can handle voltages from 110v to 220v, and is compatible with the outlets in over 150 countries. The battery, which may take up to 2.5 hours to fully charge, will power the player for about eight hours. The tiny FM radio can be preset to listen to up to 15 stations, and the MP3 player (which also supports WMA and OGG Vorbis formats) has a three line backlit high-contrast display.

MP3 Swiss Army Knife

Victorinox and Swissbit have taken the flying traveler in mind with this device which has earned a "FlySmart" logo. Since the knife and scissors

component would be banned on commercial airline flights, but many travelers would still like to listen to the MP3 player, the player itself can be separated from the knife, maintaining full functionality. The knife portion of the device can then be appropriately placed in the checked luggage, and can be reunited with the player at the destination.

This device is simply amazing, fitting all of the components in a standard sized Swiss army knife about three inches long, half an inch wide, and about, three-quarters of an inch thick, and weighs a scant three ounces. The box containing the S.Beat included the knife and MP3 player unit, remote control, high quality stereo headphones with neck strap, a protective cap (covers the USB plug when the player is removed from the knife), arm strap for outdoor sports activities, USB extension cable, USB world charger, instruction book, and CD containing the software utilities.

Since this device is just being introduced in this country, but has been available in Europe for a while, it is something that dad will find both unique and exclusive. It should be available shortly at any retailer stocking a large assortment of Victorinox products, but is currently available from several online sources. The version with the 1 GB capacity has a retail price of $189, with some domestic outlets offering this S.Beat at a small discount. The larger capacity 2 GB and 4 GB models were recently introduced in Europe, and should be available shortly in this country.

Being so new on the market, there have only been a few reviews published, but they have been universally positive. One such published review is quite representative of the several that I found. It says, "Fantastic product! Beautiful metal finish, sturdy and compact. The included headphones are top-notch— no need to spend another 50 bucks for a real pair like with all other players you buy nowadays. Sound quality will blow you away, menu user interface is comprehensive yet simple and intuitive to use/learn. Didn't even have to read the manual. And best of all; it works without some special drivers or software. Just use what you're used to for your audio and data files."

Come to think of it, maybe we should not wait until Father's Day; maybe we should not only consider this extremely useful gadget for dad, but mom, and our new graduates as well. In fact, this would make a great gift for anyone special, including yourself!

Websites:

<http://www.swissbit.com>
<http://www.victorinox.com>
<http://support.swissbit.com/pdf/s.beat_Fact_Sheet.pdf>
<http://www.victorinox.com/index.cfm?page=242&lang=E>

Ira Wilsker is an APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; and a radio & TV show host. Contact him at <iwilsker@apcug.net>

Bypass the Recycle Bin

If you want to delete a file and bypass the Windows Recycle Bin, just hold down the shift key while you click or press Delete.

This also works to bypass the Deleted Items folder in Outlook.

This is not a secure deletion though.

Hard Disk Disasters
By Dick Maybach
Member, Brookdale
Computer User Group
New Jersey

Hard disk failure is the most serious PC problem, because it jeopardizes all your data. Even if everything else in your PC dies, if your hard disk is good, you can just move it to a new machine and be back in business as though nothing had happened.

The first problem is to recognize hard disk failure. Look for one or more of the following symptoms:

• A squealing or clicking noise—you will have to open your system case to find where the noise is coming from. Diskette and CD-ROM drives and fans can produce similar noises.
• A longer than usual time to boot up.
• A longer than usual time to open a folder or file.
• Spontaneous file or folder name changes.
• Frequent error messages.
• Missing or corrupted files or folders.
• Frequent "blue screens of death."

If these begin to appear, immediately copy your data files (most likely your *My Documents* folder) to another device, preferably one with removable media, such as a CD or a DVD. Do not turn off your PC and do not spend time trying to diagnose the problem before saving your data. Every second you delay increases the likelihood that more data will be lost.

Clearly, the best defense is to back up your data before you have a problem. However, few people do this, and even if you do, it may have been some time since your last backup.

If your hard disk fails before you can save your data, all is not lost. If your data is very valuable, for example if it's customer data, you can send your disk to a commercial firm that specializes in data recovery. This service will cost from several hundred to several thousand dollars, but usually there is no fee unless they are at least partially successful. If you decide to do this, shut of your PC immediately and contact the firm for instructions. If your data is worth less than this amount, there are two things you can try that may work:

• Remove the hard drive from the system unit and give it a light tap by holding a screwdriver by its blade and tapping the unit with the handle. Reinstall the hard drive and reboot.
• Remove the drive and place it in a freezer for several minutes, until it is cold to the touch. Reinstall and reboot.

If either of these works, move your data to a safe place immediately. If you have only a partial disk failure, save as much data as you can; then try the following:

• Restart your PC, but before Windows boots, get into the BIOS setup utility. If you watch the screen carefully, you should see directions on how to do this. Often you will press F2 or F10. Look for an area called Utilities or something similar and run any drive diagnostics available.
• Run CHKDSK. (Click on *Start*, then on *Run*... and at the prompt type "chkdsk x: /r", where x: is the drive in difficulty. If c: is problem drive, you will probably see a message that chkdsk can't check the drive now, but will offer to check it

13

the next time you restart. Answer "y" and reboot.

- Run diagnostics supplied by your drive manufacturer, or if you don't have one, use Western Digital's Data Lifeguard Diagnostics, available free from <http://westerndigital.com>. Versions are available for both Windows and DOS.

You can take some simple steps to prolong the life of all your PC components.

- Keep the system unit clean, especially if it sits on the floor. Once every month or two open the system case and remove any dust and debris with a vacuum. I prefer this to compressed air, which just moves the dirt to a new resting place.
- Don't move your PC while it's operating; especially, don't jar it.
- Use a power surge protector or preferably an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). The latter are widely available for $100 or so. Besides reducing stress on your components, one of these will save your data if the power fails. I always had a UPS at work, and every so often, I would see the lights blink and hear streams of profanity from other offices whose occupants did not have one.

Modern PC components are quite reliable, and the chances are that you will replace your computer before anything fails. However, you should have a plan in case there is a problem. Similarly, the chances are that you will replace your car without ever having an accident yet you still wear a seatbelt, and carry insurance.

Dick Maybach can be reached at: <http://www.bcug.com> <N2nd(at)att.net>

Open Source Software Opens Up
By Orv Beach
Principal Member
Simi-Conejo Linux Users Group

Open Source software is programming code that's generally available at no cost to you. But we should draw a distinction between "freeware" and Open Source programs.

The premise of Open Source (and, hence the name) is that the source code of the program is available to you. That's not so much so YOU can modify it (although you could and are free to do so if you know how). It's more in order to place the program in "public escrow." Once a program has been licensed under the GPL (General Public License), it can never be retracted, and thus never orphaned.

That's an advantage for both individual users and companies; you don't have to worry about future forced upgrades by your software vendor! This licensing arrangement also encourages community development. Coders add features, fix bugs and document applications and return those improvements to the users.

As a result, Open Source software continues to gain in popularity. The

best current examples are probably the Firefox browser, and the OpenOffice office suite (This article was written in OpenOffice.) Both are popular and powerful applications that run equally well on several operating systems

Firefox is generally faster than Internet Explorer, and arguably more secure. Tabbed browsing and a wide array of theme choices are popular features. Patches are generally provided very quickly to rectify any security problem that might appear in contrast to the relatively slow pace of fixes for commercial code. OpenOffice has improved in functionality, and in compatibility with Microsoft Office since its first release about two years ago. It can read from and write to Word, PowerPoint and Excel formats, compose HTML documents and output to Flash and Acrobat files. Need more? How about a database? Both applications are frequently updated; current version for Firefox is 1.5, OpenOffice, 2.0.1. Best of all, both are free for the downloading.

Some other good examples of Open Source software available for both Windows and Linux are:
• GAIM, the "multi-protocol" instant messaging program
• The GIMP, a great graphics editing program
• Blender, a 3D modeling and animation program

There are Windows applications with no perfect analog in Linux, but the situation is improving daily. Linux has matured in all desktop areas. For example, multimedia programs for manipulating graphics or editing video and audio are often on par with their commercial counterparts. In fact, Linux

"distributions" either come with all that good stuff, or if not, they can be downloaded separately. The distributions range from completely free via downloaded CD images, or inexpensively purchased, with some customer support and documentation included. Much of the differentiation between these distributions (Fedora, Ubuntu, SuSE) lies in the graphical installer and system tools, driving development of a more user-friendly experience for even a novice.

Due to the inherent security in Linux, occurrences of viruses happen about once a decade. Spyware, or malware programs aren't a problem because they can't install themselves. And Linux is stable; it doesn't crash very often. If you leave your Linux box running, several months later you'll realize it's still running, and hasn't had to be rebooted.

If you'd like to experiment with Linux, but don't want to commit to loading it on a computer, there are "Live CDs" available. These are bootable Linux CDs—everything runs off the CD rather than from a hard disk. This allows you to "try before you install". I'd say "try before you buy," but the buying is optional! Some examples of bootable Linux CDs are Knoppix and Mepis,

If you're still dependent on some Windows applications, or want to be able to use both Windows and Linux, you can "dual-boot" your computer. That means putting both Windows and Linux on the same hard drive (or separate ones), and when you boot, be able to select which operating system will boot. That gives you a lot of flexibility in what you can do with your computer.

Linux isn't perfect; there are some shortcomings:

- Administration of a Linux system is different (not harder, just different); the methods for installing and upgrading programs have to be learned.
- High end games aren't as widely available for Linux (exceptions include the iD series—Doom & Quake—as well as Unreal Tournament).
- Personal Finance is still weak; there's no direct equivalent for Quicken (although GNUCash is very usable, and of course free to try).

Hardware requirements

For good results a modern "full house" installation of Linux intended for desktop use should be installed on a computer that has the following characteristics:

- 800 MHz CPU (faster is better)
- 6–10 Gigs of disk space
- Minimum 256 Megs of RAM (512 Megs is better if you're going to have more than a couple of large applications open at the same time)
- A video card with 8 Megs of RAM or better (shared RAM is ok, if that's the type of video your computer has.
- A 17" or larger monitor audio card & speakers

Note: Inexpensive WinModems are not well supported; neither are WinPrinters; the inexpensive ones that require the CPU to do all the formatting.

If you're read about Linux and are interested, the Fourth Annual So Cal Linux Expo was held February 11 & 12, 2006, at the Radisson LAX hotel. The Expo had seminars on advanced topics, plus beginner sessions. And there was an expo floor where vendors rubbed elbows with various Open Source groups such as the maintainers of KDE and GNOME, the two major desktops used in Linux. For late-breaking info, go to <http://www.socallinuxexpo.com>

Summary: Linux is easy to install, the applications are easy to use, but the system administration is different than Windows (some would say it's still more difficult than it should be), but like other areas of Linux, it's improving steadily.

Linux puts the "fun" back into computing! Try it! Grab a copy and install it. The only thing you'll spend is some time, and just think of the hardware upgrades you can buy with the money you saved on software!

Discounts
By Judy Taylour
Chair, APCUG Benefits & Services

Here are five discount offers to forward to your members as a benefit of your group belonging to APCUG and a benefit for them since they belong to your group. APCUG does not endorse these products, the offers are sent to you for information only.

Red Mercury <http://www.red-mercury.com>. The discount is $5 off instantly for any of the AcidSolitaire collection games. If you buy more than one of the games in the collection, you get an additional $10 off each additional game. The discounted price ends up being $14.95 for the first game and $9.95 for additional games.

WebEyes <http://webeyes.us> $24.95 / with discount $19.95. APCUG is the promotion code.

The Internet Explorer software that allows you to adjust type size easily

(144 pt) and eliminates scrolling. By clicking on "Read like a book" you can simply turn the pages like a book.

"If you need a little help reading Web pages, you will gladly pull out your wallet for this one!" Sandy Berger, nationally recognized computer expert and author at <CompuKiss.com>. Read the complete review at <http://www.compukiss.com/visioncenterhtm/review380.htm>

LapWorks <http://lapworks.net> 20% off all products—just enter APCUG20%OFF in the Promo Code Calculator. The discount is valid through June 30, 2006. LapWorks features Laptop legs to cool and elevate your notebook computer; laptop desks that are scientifically proven to significantly reduce heat build-up in your notebook computer; the SwivlPad is an ultra thin turntable or lazy susan that allows you to easily swivel your notebook computer to show the display to another person—it also works with LCD monitors, or similar size objects.

TrendMicro <http://www.trendmicro.com/offers/usergroup> PC-cillin Internet Security $29.95

Corel—50% off. <http://www.corel.com/promotions/cug_usd.html>.
WordPerfect Office X3—$159
CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X3—$179
Corel Painter IX—$229
Paint Shop Pro X—$59
Corel Photo Album 6—$29
Corel Painter Essentials 3—$99

| BOARD MEETING |
| 05/14/2006 |
| Warner Mach |

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
President Gary DeNise, Vice President Richard Jackson (late), Treasurer Bette Gay, Acting Secretary Warner Mach, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Carl Massie, Publications Committee Chairman Tom McNorton, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chester Blechinger. Also present was Steve Yuhasz.
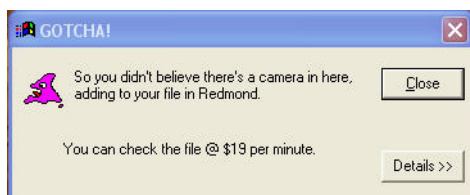
OLD BUSINESS
Tom Callow moved to reimburse Warner Mach $8.44 for refreshment supplies. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bette Gay reported that there was $7302.64 in the treasury at the end of April and $7262.62 currently. The membership stands at 80.

NEW BUSINESS
Bob Clyne moved that we terminate the agreement with Richard Nagy, wherein we ran a notice about his computer shows in the DATA BUS, and SEMCO membership cards were accepted for a $1 discount for admission to the Nagy computer shows. Mr. Clyne observed that the Nagy shows seemed to be suspended, and recent shows had decrease in size. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it carried.

There was discussion whether putting some of the bank balance into something other than checking could be to our advantage. Bette Gay observed that we have to maintain $5,000 in the 'business' checking account in order to avoid

special charges. She agreed to check on some of our options for the future.

Franz Breidenich and Bob Clyne brought up the issue of whether we should drop the special "student membership" provision ($15) for students of Oakland University, noting that this provision was specifically added to help us make our case for using Oakland University facilities. Richard Jackson suggested that, rather than dropping the provision for Oakland University, we should broaden it to include students in general.

Bob Clyne moved to drop the student membership provision for Oakland University students. Tom Callow seconded the motion. The motion failed to get the required 2/3 majority.

Richard Jackson noted that the WJR interview, featuring Steve Yuhasz and Carl Massie Jr. was a big success.

To follow-up on the WJR interview there was discussion of: (1) Providing SEMCO memberships to be given out by WJR on the air. (2) Give a complementary subscription to the DATA BUS to an appropriate individual at WJR.

Bob Clyne moved to donate three SEMCO memberships to be given out in three successive months and that they be given at the shows approximately eight days before a SEMCO meeting. The motion was seconded by Tom Callow and carried.

Tom Callow moved that SEMCO give a complementary DATA BUS subscription to one of the persons involved in WJR's 'Internet Advisor' radio show; the person to be determined by Richard Jackson and/or Steve Yuhasz." This motion was seconded by Bob Clyne and carried.

Richard Jackson noted that we have permission, from WJR, to put the audio from the WJR interview up on the SEMCO web site in MP3 format, and to edit out portions that do not apply to us.

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

Warner Mach has kindly consented to write the Board Minutes in the absence of Carol Sanzi. -ed

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Access The Windows Start Menu Without a Mouse

Press CTRL-ESC to open the Start Menu and then use the arrows to navigate and the "Enter" key to run programs and make selections.

DATA BUS Data
by Tom McNorton

As a Member of SEMCO, I am sure you often wondered how your membership fees are being used. I obtained the following from Bob Clyne and thought the membership would find it interesting. The DATA BUS, printing, mailing, and paper is one of our larger expenses.

Our May mailing list was:
- 93 total mailed
- 81 to paid members
- 01 to Honorary member
- 11 Complementary issues

Many of the complimentary issues go to other computer clubs, newspaper editors, and radio show hosts. The Board of Directors must vote on each complimentary newsletter mailed. This is only one way the Board of Directors controls costs and keeps membership fees low.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Carl Massie, Jr.

June 11 : Whittles' Picks for the Digital Home: Dave Whittle, of Webworking Services Corporation, and the author of "Cyberspace: The Human Dimension," who will show his favorite discoveries from recent trade shows. He will demonstrate muvee™ autoProducer, a program which will transform your videos and photos into movie productions automatically; 3D Album's line of products which you can use to easily create Hollywood-style photo showcases to display and share your digital photos; and iSeeMedia's, <http://www.iseephotovista.com/products/panorama/product_info.html> Photovista Panorama 3.5, which lets you create spectacular 360°panoramas that you can print, e-mail and publish to the web. Dave will also discuss the Zip*Linq line of retractable data cables for your mobile computer.

June 11: Two Programs Today!!
Program No. 1: ClickBook 9.0 and Click2PDF: SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate ClickBook 9.0, a versatile printing utility that automatically turns documents into many different types of finished products such as books, day planner pages, banners, and posters. Click2PDF is an inexpensive program for creating Adobe Acrobat files from any Windows Program.
Program No. 2: Outlook Express: SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman, Carl Massie Jr., will demonstrate fully backing up Outlook Express and optionally transferring the information to a new computer.

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

June 11: Help A Q & A:
 Discussion directed by the audience.

July 3, 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.**

July 2006 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., June 18, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <mcnortontl@ameritech.net>. 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)
Dates vary, 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)
June 7–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin Building, Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187<http://www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: Demonstration of PowerPoint and Impress.

DCOM Computer Club
June 9–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)
June 13–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817 (enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn.org/FACE/>.

MacGroup Detroit
June 25–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: Everything iPod and iTunes

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
June 17–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.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
June 10–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.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group
June 8–(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
Every Fri., 10:15am at Oak Park Recreation Bldg, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)
September 5–Tuesday 7:30pm, (1st Tuesday)(no meetings in July or August); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http:/www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. Topic: Home Networking and Wireless Access Points, Part 3.

Wayne State University Mac User Group
June 10–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.

Inkjet Printer Care
By Kathy Frey
Computer Club of Green Valley

If you are leaving for the summer months, take care of your printer before you leave. Printers should not sit for months with the ink cartridges left installed in the printer. Consult your printer manual for proper removal.

Even if you just installed a new cartridge, you will need to remove it. Wrap the cartridge tightly, with either or a combination of, Saran wrap, aluminum foil, and a resealable plastic bag. Remove as much air as possible from the packaging. Store in the vegetable compartment of your refrigerator. The vegetable compartment has some moisture which will help keep the cartridge from drying out.

There is no guarantee that the cartridges will not dry out and therefore be unusable. However, taking precautions before you leave may save you the cost of purchasing a new cartridge.

**MAY
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
Warner Mach, Coordinator
Gary Denise (& Kay)
Roland Maki
Betty Mackenzie

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

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

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier
AutoCAD: Comptois
Genealogy: Cook
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz
Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz
Security: Bader

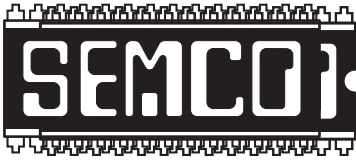**MS Office for Windows:** Callow
MS Word: Clyne
Networking: Callow
Novell Netware: Yuhasz
Quicken: Clyne
Geocaching: Cook

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@msn.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 — June/July

ArvinMeritor Building

2135 West Maple Road

Troy, Michigan

June 11–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

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

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 pm**. Program: Whttle's Picks for the Digital Home:** DaveWhittle of Webworking Services Corporation, and the author of "Cyberspace:The Human Dimension," will show his favorite discoveries from recent trade shows. Page 19 for more info.

SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 pm**.** Refreshments! (Reminder: We must continue to 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**. TwoPrograms: Program #1, ClickBook & Click2PDF:** presented by SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow. **Program #2, Outlook Express,** presented by SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman, Carl Massie Jr. Carl will demonstrate many aspects of Outlook Express.

SIG-ADVANCED , **July 3, 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.**
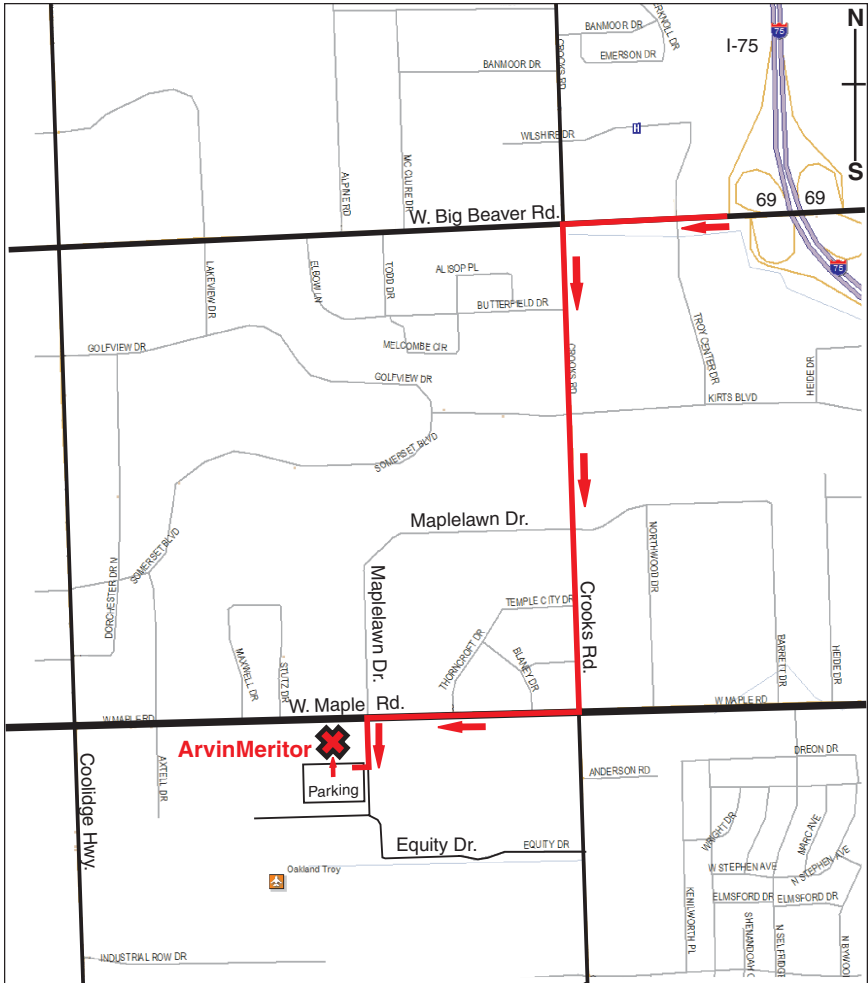
July 9–SEMCO SUNDAY

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, MI 48084

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. Enter the building thru the South 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)
June 11
July 9

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