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SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Deals Column, by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click .....	3
iPhotoMEASURE Review, by Franz Breidenich.....	5
Spybot: Free Utilities & Spyware Protection, by Ira Wilsker .....	6
The Big Red X, by Vinny La Bash .....	9
New Security Products Shown at APCUG Conf., by Ira Wilsker .....	12
Moving to Vista—What Not to Do, by Sandy Berger .....	14
The New, the Best, and the Worst, by Pim Borman .....	16
Board Meeting Minutes, by Carol Sanzi .....	18
Internet Speed, by Bill Agnew .....	18
SIGS: IBM, IBM Intermediate, Advanced, & Novice IBM Group .....	19
Other Groups Calendar of Events.....	20
No Meeting in April—Reminder.....	21
Computer Resource People .....	21
SEMCO Calendar .....	22
Map & Directions to SEMCO Meeting at ArvinMeritor Building .....	23

## SEMCO OFFICERS

President	Gary DeNise	(248) 634-7514
Vice-President	Richard Jackson	(248) 546-3694
Secretary	Carol Sanzi	(586) 739-7256
Treasurer	Bette Gay	(248) 641-7799
Members at Large of the Board of Directors		
	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
	Chester Blechinger	(248) 338-2653

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

Acting Publications Committee Chair	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
Editor	Warner Mach	(734) 326-0733
Associate Editor	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
Proofreader	Beth Fordyce	(734) 453-0349

## SIG (SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP) CHAIRPERSONS

SIG-IBM: CoChairman	Tom Callow	(248) 642-5770 (9-5)
CoChairman	Warner Mach	(734) 326-0733
SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE	Carl Massie, Jr.	(586) 482-0053
NOVICE-IBM GROUP	Rotating Hosts	
SIG-ADVANCED	Franz Breidenich	(248) 398-3359

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**All SEMCO correspondence should be addressed to**

**SEMCO - P.O. Box 707 - Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707**

Web site: <http://www.semco.org>

E-mail: [semco@semco.org](mailto:semco@semco.org)


General information: (voice) answering device in Royal Oak **(248) 398-7560**

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**DEALS COLUMN**  
 from the DealsGuy  
 Greater Orlando Computer UG  
 by Bob *"The Cheap skate"* Click

## Interesting Items

Here are two items I found interesting in Information Week. Read about invisible RFID ink for cattle that also won't contaminate anything: <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=UKBMPSHVFDN IKQSNDLRCKH0CJUNN2JVN?articleID=196802844&queryText=K.C.+Jones>>. Also a robot called "iRobot Create" that you can send to the kitchen if you are thirsty. I couldn't find it on the magazine's Web site so here is the product's URL: <<http://www.iRobot.com/>>. They have other robots that you have probably heard about, such as the Rhumba robot vacuum cleaner.

## Reminders

The reminder about a free version of Tax Act <<http://www.taxact.com>> for doing your taxes is never very timely, but perhaps it's because of how early I must write this column and the fact that I'm not even doing my taxes yet. You can even file your tax return electronically now with the free version.

If you don't feel comfortable doing your federal income tax on your own computer, and you make \$39,000 or less, you can call for an appointment with an IRS volunteer who will meet face-to-face with you to do it. Call 1-800-829-1040 to find the nearest IRS volunteer office.

Don't forget the free income tax help from the great folks at AARP. Call the AARP chapter near you to see where they offer this help, and the times they are available.

Two items below are announcements that included a user group discount. I have edited them, but they are mostly in the vendor's own words so check further on their Web sites for complete information. I have not tried any of the products myself although I was invited to do so. They both sound very useful.

## **Manage Your Clipboard History. One Version Is FREE And A Nice Discount On The Other.**

LW-WORKS Software has released Version 4.0 of Clipboard Recorder, an application that helps users manage their Windows clipboard history and provides easy ways for users to access their saved clipboard data. Once it's running, Clipboard Recorder adds an icon to your system tray and monitors your system clipboard. As you copy any data from other applications to the system clipboard, Clipboard Recorder will capture it and store it to the listening clipboard record list in a compressed format.

Clipboard Recorder provides four ways to select the records: Popup Window, Floating Window, Menu Window and Main Window. Most of the time, you don't need to leave your working application to access your clipboard history! The selected clipboard records can be pasted to your working application directly just as if you have pressed "Ctrl + V". Clipboard Recorder also features transferring clipboard data between computers. Therefore, users can do "Ctrl + C" on one computer and "Ctrl + V" on another.

Clipboard Recorder is available in two versions, Professional and Standard (Freeware). The professional version with complete online help costs \$29.95 (user group members get a 30% discount using the coupon code

“Special”). Clipboard Recorder 4.0 runs under Windows 98/ME, Windows 2000, or XP Home and Professional. Visit the LW-WORKS Software home page at <http://www.lw-works.com> to order Clipboard Recorder or to download a fully functional trial copy.

### **Here Is Help To Sort Your MP3 Files**

This handy utility will sort a musical collection of any size, quickly reorganizing folders and renaming files on your hard drive. MP3 Sorter physically rearranges music on your hard drive while similar programs just create a list of files, but make no actual changes. After you use MP3 Sorter, all changes will be seen in Explorer as if you arranged files manually. Prior to actually rearranging files, MP3 Sorter allows users to see the structure of files and folders after renaming/rearranging takes place. MP3 Sorter renames files according to the artist’s name and the title of the track and places them in folders like this; “Artists\Album + Year”. The utility has an adjustable renaming system.

The utility has a preview window showing the newly arranged structure and comes with a Duplicate Checker that insures against accidental overwrites. You can see the transfer result to avoid any transfer mistake, and if you want to undo the transfer operation, it is possible to return the original file and folder structure with the help of the Roll Back Manager. Also, you can make MP3 Sorter delete source files, which will be done only if copying was successful. MP3 Sorter provides an advanced editor so you can change custom tokens whenever you like. After MP3 Sorter neatly reorganizes your MP3 collection, you will be able to find required music

tracks on your hard drive with the speed of a radio DJ.

MP3 Sorter runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$24.95 (USD) for a single-user license, but users group members get a 10% discount by using this URL: <https://secure.shareit.com/shareit/cart.html?PRODUCT%5B300080839%5D=1&COUPON1=MP3ST891>>. Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on ‘MP3 Sorter,’ as well as a free trial copy is available free of charge from <http://www.prograce.com>.

Product page link: <http://prograce.com/index.php?page=mp3>>

Download link: <http://prograce.com/download/MP3SorterInstall.exe>>

### **The Bundle Is Back!**

Colleen Toumayan from Diskeeper Corporation tells me the “Bundle” is back. It consists of one Diskeeper Home Edition, and one Undelete 5 Home Edition for just \$49.95. Most of you already know the good qualities of Diskeeper products. Get it here: <http://purchase.diskeeper.com/checkout/addtocart.aspx?Item=2140>> I’m glad Colleen stayed (she had considered leaving Diskeeper) with the company because she keeps me apprised of special offers and is a great resource.

### **Free Software That is Interesting**

I saw this in Mug Monitor, newsletter for Macon Users Group, <http://www.maconusersgroup.org>> and wondered if it would interest any of my readers. It is called Google Sketchup 6. It is a FREE 3D modeling software that helps you in remodeling or landscaping. It has to do with Google Earth. I can’t fully explain it so check it out at <http://sketchup.google.com/>>. It is a great deal because

if you want their Pro version, it will cost you a cool \$495. I don't know what that one has that the free one does not, but you can read up on it.

***That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. I have some new product announcements on my Web site page. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheap skate) Click <[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>***



**iPhotoMEASURE  
By Franz Breidenich**

iPhotoMEASURE was developed for contractors to take measurements of buildings or other objects in order to prepare an estimate of job costs and other purposes. Do-It-Yourself homeowners may also find it useful when planning projects and buying materials. The client or the contractor takes digital photographs of the area where the work needs to be done. If the client took the photographs, they are then sent to the contractor. The contractor can then use these photographs to get measurements of the work area and prepare the estimate.

I reviewed the downloadable Standard Edition version 2.1 for the PC of iPhotoMEASURE.

If using the downloadable version of iPhotoMEASURE you must download and print a PDF file of the DigiTarget

either the 7.5 or 15 inch version. The box version of iPhotoMEASURE comes with a 7.5 inch DigiTarget. To start this process, you must place the DigiTarget in the center of the area to be photographed. The DigiTarget is the most important element of the photograph, as it is the object that gives the basis for the measurements. The DigiTarget must be horizontal in the picture, and the camera must be perpendicular to the DigiTarget and the surface being photographed. The entire surface to be measured must be in the picture. The photos must be in JPG format.

Once the photographs are received, they are loaded into the iPhotoMEASURE software using the Load Photo tool. Next, click on the photograph's DigiTarget using the DigiTarget tool. You must accurately measure the DigiTarget, by dragging the corners of the DigiTarget tool to the outside edges of the photographic DigiTarget. The accuracy of your measurements depends on how accurately you measure the DigiTarget. The program then asks you what target size is being used. Select the correct answer. You are now ready to make your measurements on the photograph.

Select the Measure tool to make your measurements. Start at the point you want to measure from and drag to the point you want to measure to. As you are dragging you will see the distance of the line, in feet and inches appear alongside the line. To terminate the line you release the mouse button. If you make an error, you can delete the measurement and the line with the Delete tool. You can click on an end point of the line and move it to change the measurement.

Another tool on the screen is the Save tool, to save your PRJ files. You will lose your work if you do not save your files before you use the Quit tool. The program does not prompt you to save if you forget. The PRJ file is the file that stores the work you have done with iPhotoMEASURE on your JPG file. When you Save, it creates and saves the PRJ file with the same name as the JPG file.

Navigation tools zoom in, zoom out, fit all, and pan the JPG photos. There is also a color palette of eight dots to select for the measurement lines. Finally, there are the Help and the Quit tools. The Help tool brings up a one-page document with all the instructions provided by the author. The Quit tool closes the program without saving your work. So you must do a Save before you quit or you will lose your work.

The most serious fault I found with this program was how measurements were shown on the photo. The programs allow you to use a color palette for the line selection but it puts all the measurements in the same red color. If you have lines close together, you are not sure what measurement goes to what line. An improvement would be, to have the measurement of the line use the same color as the line.

At the bottom of the Help tool document, the vendor states that additional help is available at their Website at <<http://www.iphotomeasure.com/support>>, but the only additional help I found there was a link to contact Customer Service, and the list of Frequently Ask Questions.

This program iPhotoMEASURE seems to do the job it was created to do. It is of limited use for many computer users, but to a professional builder or

contractor it may be a time and labor saving device.

To obtain this program, go to the company website at <<http://www.iphotomeasure.com>>. They have versions for both PC and MAC. The downloadable version for PC or MAC is \$99.99. They have a Deluxe Box version PC/MAC for \$119.99. Included in the deluxe box are a DigiTarget, restickable adhesive, an erasable marker, and a user manual.



**Spybot: Useful Free  
Utilities Plus Spyware  
Protection  
By Ira Wilsker**

On one of my recent radio shows (KLVI 560am 1-3 pm Saturdays), I had three callers within a single half-hour period who had a similar problem with their computers. They all had computers that were sluggish as well as had apparent software conflicts based on the symptoms presented over the phone. They all had a lot of icons in the bottom right corner of the screen adjacent to the clock, indicating that too many programs were probably loaded when the computer booted. My on-air diagnosis for all three was the same; they needed to clean up their “startup,” or list of programs that load every time the computer was turned on. I asked the first caller if he had a utility installed on his computer, the very popular and free “Spybot Search & Destroy.”

Spybot Search & Destroy is an enormously popular utility best known for its excellent ability to detect and destroy spyware and adware on computers, as well as providing full time protection from over 16,000 spyware programs through its “Immunize” feature. Published reviews generally

rate Spybot very well, and PC Magazine gave Spybot its coveted “Editors’ Choice Award.” According to some published sources, tens of millions of copies of Spybot have been downloaded. Once the program, currently version 1.4, is downloaded from <[www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org)> and installed, it will go online to download updates, and then offer to immunize the computer from spyware. Normally, the program will then do a complete scan of the computer for spyware, adware, malicious and tracking cookies, registry entries installed by malware, and other nefarious items. The user is then given the option to remove all of the detected malware (usually a good idea), or select what actions should be taken. Spybot typically offers weekly updates, usually on Wednesdays, to keep its protection and features up to date. It would be a good practice for the user to re-scan the computer for new malware attacks with each update, and to immunize the computer with any new immunities posted.

Spybot, while an excellent anti-malware utility, also has a lot of other features which are frequently unknown to most of its users. Many useful utilities are built into Spybot that can improve computer performance, and promote safe computing practices. The default install of Spybot has a simple menu bar at the top of the page with only four choices, File, Mode, Language, and Help. The File menu only offers “Check for Problems” and Exit as its choices. Language allows the user to select any of the five built in languages for the software, German, English, French, Spanish, or Italian. Help is self explanatory offering help topics and a tutorial, as well as a link to make

voluntary online donations to support the continuation of the very worthwhile Spybot service. The most mysterious item on the menu is “Mode,” offering only a choice of Default or Advanced settings; Advanced is where a world of helpful utilities opens allowing the user to take better control of his computer.

By clicking on Mode – Advanced a new column opens on the left of the program offering a variety of options, Spybot (the main scan and immunize program), Settings, Tools, and “Info & License.” Settings simply allows the user to customize the Spybot experience, but with the defaults providing totally adequate service. “Info & License” shows the version number and most recent update, credits, another link for donations, and historical statistics for Spybot’s previous scans.

It is the “Tools” button that opens a panoply of useful utilities to improve computing performance and security. Over a dozen utilities and features are shown which can perform a variety of tasks. One integral utility is “Secure Shredder” to where unwanted files or data can be dragged and then automatically deleted and overwritten with random characters making the material virtually unrecoverable. Internet Explorer and Microsoft utilize a language called “ActiveX,” and the “ActiveX” tools selection will open a window showing all of the ActiveX software resident on the computer. Sadly, some miscreants create malware in Microsoft’s ActiveX, and these undesirable and potentially dangerous programs will be labeled in red by Spybot for instant removal, while legitimate and safe ActiveX utilities will be indicated as safe by a green icon.

Many websites and software titles install a type of program into Internet



Explorer called a “Browser Helper Object,” or more commonly, just BHOs. While many are legitimate and useful, many are known sources of spyware, advertising popups, web tracking or diverting, or other annoying and possibly unsafe functions. Using a traditional red for bad, green for good set of icons, the user can easily control which BHOs are loaded into Internet Explorer. An “IE Tweak” utility allows the user to customize Internet Explorer and provide additional protection against browser hijackers.

Browsers use a “Hosts File” to convert commonly used Internet URL names into more efficient IP addresses (a series of numbers such as 123.45.678.9). Some hijackers invade the hosts file and enter fraudulent data to redirect the browser to scam or criminal websites used for identity theft and other negative purposes. The Spybot “Host Files” utility allows the user to easily manage the hosts file, and determine if unwanted browser hijacks have taken place. Spybot has a lengthy list of hundreds of known scam and identity theft sites which can be added to the computer’s hosts file, mostly pointing to the Internet dead end address of 127.0.0.1.

When I asked my first caller with the slow and sluggish computer if he had Spybot installed, he told me that yes he did, and that it had been recently updated. I instructed him to open Spybot, and click on MODE – ADVANCED – TOOLS. I then asked him to click on what may be among the most useful utilities to improve performance, “System Startup.” He followed my prompting, and dutifully informed me that there were many checked entries shown in his startup,

and that they were mostly highlighted in red, yellow, or green. He asked what he should do.

I explained that items in red were often viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, or other types of malware and should be unchecked at a minimum, or preferably deleted. Green items were recognized as safe, and should be left alone. Yellow items were personal choice, and could be left checked (loaded at startup) or unchecked at will. Items not highlighted may be system utilities or items unknown to Spybot.

The caller asked how he would know what the cryptic descriptions meant, and I told him to click on the two triangular arrows on the right edge of the window, and a sliding partition would open. Clicking on an entry would display details of the startup item, including a description of the item, its source, and function.

This is from the comprehensive startup list maintained by Paul Collins at <[www.sysinfo.org](http://www.sysinfo.org)>, which contains tens of thousands of searchable and categorized entries commonly used by people who utilize Microsoft’s “MSCONFIG” command to manually control startup functions. This database is integrated into Spybot, and is concurrently updated periodically as Spybot is updated.

The caller deleted the items in red, and decided to uncheck most of the yellow items after deciding that he did not need them loaded at boot. He left the green and white items alone. As directed he rebooted his computer. Eureka! It booted much faster, and programs loaded faster. There were far fewer icons in the taskbar by his clock. His software conflicts ceased. He called back and told me that when he went to Start-Turn Off



Computer that the computer shut down much faster. The System Startup feature built into Spybot solved his problems.

Minutes later another caller said that he had similar problems, and I recommended Spybot to him, as well as to the third caller. Both were instructed to download it, install it, update it, and run it. I then told them separately to click on Mode – Advanced – Tools – System Startup and delete the reds, decide on the yellows, and leave the greens alone. I tell most callers to call me back and let me know how it works; these two both had an epiphany and marveled at the simple solution to their vexing problems. Spybot, that well known anti-spyware program, provided them with other less known but very useful utilities, all for free. All three callers were very satisfied with what Spybot did for them.

I have used Spybot for years, and have frequently promoted it on my show. While the software is totally free to download and use, I personally make periodic voluntary online contributions to support Spybot, and encourage others to do likewise. In the years that I have used Spybot, I have only had one minor problem with it, and that was a documented conflict between Spybot's Immunize function and the anti-spyware function built into Trend Micro's Internet Security Suite 2007. Turning off Immunize instantly resolved the problem in this case.

I recommend that all PC users download Spybot and scan their computers for spyware and other malware, and then use the startup manager and other utilities to improve performance and safety. For the money (free), you will not find a better deal.

## WEBSITE REFERENCES:

<<http://www.safer-networking.org>>

—Main Page

<<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html>>—Information

<<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/download>>—Free Download

<<http://www.sysinfo.org>>—Paul Collins Startup List (among others)

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



### **The Big Red X By Vinny La Bash**

E-mail, along with the spreadsheet, is one of the greatest computer applications ever developed. Along with its usefulness are a few minor, but irritating inconveniences. The one we'll address in this article is the frustration with observing a red X where an image should appear

There are several possible causes for pictures failing to materialize. They are not particularly difficult to correct, but the method is far from obvious. Start by right-clicking the red X and from the popup menu select "Show Picture." If this works, consider yourself blessed. More likely is that either your e-mail setup is not allowing the picture to be viewed or the sender's options are not allowing the picture to be sent. Let's make sure that your setup isn't causing the problem, and then we'll figure out what to do with the sender

If the problem is at your end, it could be caused by having Internet Explorer's e-mail settings too restrictive. To reset the default settings for Internet Explorer 6.0 open Internet Explorer,

click Tools from the top menu bar, and select Internet Options.

(1) Click on the General tab to make sure it's active.

(2) Click Delete Files.

(3) Click Delete All Offline Content, and click OK.

(4) Click the Delete Cookies button, and click OK.

(5) Click the Settings button.

(6) Set cache to 25 MB or less, and select Every Visit to Page, then click OK.

Next, make the Security tab active by clicking on it. There are four zones listed on the security tab: Internet, Local Intranet, Trusted Sites, and Restricted Sites.

(1) Click Internet.

(2) Click the Default Level button.

(3) Repeat the steps for each of the remaining zones.

Third, click on the Privacy tab, and click the Default button. If the Default button is grayed out, ignore this step. Now click the Connections tab.

(1) Click the LAN Settings button.

(2) Make sure nothing is checked, and click OK.

Last, click on the Advanced tab.

(1) Click Restore Defaults.

(2) Click Apply and OK.

Internet Explorer 7 is similar, but there are enough differences to warrant its own set of instructions. Open Internet Explorer, click Tools, and select Internet Options.

First, look at the General tab.

(1) Click the Delete button.

(2) The Delete Browsing History dialog box appears. Click the Delete Files button.

(3) Select Yes in the confirmation box.

(4) Repeat step 2 for the Delete cookies, and Delete history buttons.

(5) Click Close.

(6) Click the Settings button in the Browsing history section.

(7) Select "Every time I visit the webpage," then set the "Disk space to use" value to 50 Megabytes or less.

(8) Click OK.

Next, click the Security tab. There are four zones listed on the security tab: Internet, Local Intranet, Trusted Sites, and Restricted Sites.

(1) If the Set all zones to default level button is not grayed, out click it and you're done with this section. Otherwise continue with step 2.

(2) Click Internet.

(3) Click the Default level button (if it is not grayed out).

(4) Repeat the steps for the remaining zones.

Click on the Privacy tab, and click the Default button unless it's grayed out. Then click the Connections tab.

(1) Click the LAN settings button to activate another dialog box.

(2) Make sure nothing is checked, and click OK.

Finally, click on the Advanced tab.

(1) Click the Restore advanced settings button. Don't, repeat don't click the Reset button as that will delete any forms and passwords saved through auto-complete.

(2) Click Apply and OK.

That takes care of your browser. If you're using Outlook or Outlook Express, you need to check several more options that control how images are received or sent. There are two ways to send pictures in e-mails. You can imbed the picture in the e-mail or you can send the picture as an attachment. Whichever way you choose, you need to set your e-mail client so it can handle

pictures, and you do that by setting your e-mail to work in HTML format. We'll start with Outlook Express and finish up with Outlook.

We'll make a big assumption that all of your recipients are set up to receive their e-mail in HTML format. You need to make sure that you have Outlook Express set up to send e-mail in HTML. Service Pack 2 should be installed on your system. Because of its extra security features, you need to avoid blocking attachments when you send or receive e-mail.

- (1) Open Outlook Express, go to the Tools/menu, and click "Options."

- (2) Click the "Send" tab, and then select "HTML" as the format to send mail.

- (3) Click the Button to the right that's named "HTML Settings," and put a check in the box that says "Send Pictures with Messages." Be sure that "Quoted Printable" is the selected in the "Encode text using" box.

- (4) Click OK.

- (5) Click the Read tab.

- (6) Confirm that the "Read all messages in plain text" is not checked.

Your machine is now setup to correctly send and receive images. If people who are receiving your e-mail complain about red Xs, send them these instructions. If you want to check out your system, try sending some e-mails to yourself.

If you're using Outlook, perform the following check.

- (1) Open Outlook and select Options from the Tools menu.

- (2) Select the Mail Format tab.

- (3) In the "Message format" section select HTML from the drop down menu.

- (4) Click the Internet Format button

- (5) In the HTML options section, confirm there is no checkmark in any of the boxes in the dialog box.

- (6) In the Outlook Rich Text options section, select "Convert to HTML format" from the drop down menu.

- (7) Click OK to save the settings.

- (8) Click OK to exit.

Other possibilities that could prevent pictures being displayed in your e-mail are your anti-virus and firewall settings. You may need to relax the security settings on these programs. We can't provide instructions for this because we don't know whose software you're using. You may need to contact the producer of the software for information.

If you create and send an e-mail with a photo image or forward an e-mail with a photo in it and the recipient gets a red X instead of the picture, you can be fairly confident that their e-mail, firewall or anti-virus setup is preventing the picture from being seen. Send these instructions to them.

***Vinny La Bash is a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida and can be reached at <[ylabash\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:ylabash(at)comcast.net)><<http://www.spug.org>>.***

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**New Security Products  
Shown at APCUG Annual  
Conference  
By Ira Wilsker**

I recently had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting and convention of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) in Las Vegas. Even though I have attended APCUG annual events since 1991, it always amazes me how quickly technology changes, and how those changes are rapidly introduced to we consumers. Every year participants are astounded by what we see, but every year has also demonstrated technologies dwarfing those shown the previous year. The APCUG events were all on topics related to personal computers, including security, applications, operating systems, hardware, CPU, and other technological services and components. Three of the presenters were companies in the computer security software sector.

Grisoft <[www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)> is a computer security software publisher headquartered in the Czech Republic, and best known in the U.S. for its very popular free version of AVG antivirus software. I was very surprised to learn that the more sophisticated and comprehensive commercial versions of AVG are among the most widely used computer security utilities in Europe.

AVG has a professional staff of engineers in Europe, but also has sales, and more importantly technical support services, located in the U.S. I have to admit that until I saw the AVG-Grisoft presentation, I was unaware of the degree of sophistication and quality features built in and backing up the AVG products.

My opinion of AVG was positively changed, as I had always thought of it as an excellent free antivirus product; now I know it as a technological leader providing enhanced features and functionality in its products.

While I will still recommend the free version of AVG antivirus software to those who may not be able to afford commercial software, I would also hope that those who use AVG free version and are satisfied with it would eventually upgrade to the more comprehensive and feature rich commercial products.

AVG offers a comprehensive selection of security software ranging from antivirus software to complete security suites. AVG has been certified as among the most effective antivirus products by several independent testing and rating services.

Panda Software <[www.pandasoftware.com](http://www.pandasoftware.com)> is a publisher of computer security software headquartered in Spain, but with a strong American presence. I first became acquainted with Panda several years ago when I purchased a copy of Panda Antivirus at one of the big-box office supply stores. I had read some amazing reviews of it in a computer magazine, so I decided to try it on my Windows 98 computer to replace an expired competing big-named American product. My "98" computer continued to have Panda protect it for the remainder of its lifetime, and Panda never failed me.

At APCUG, Panda amazed me with its degree of technical sophistication in dealing with the changing threats facing the computing public. According to Panda, over 90,000 new malware threats appeared in 2006, with some individual months in 2006 having as

many new threats as in all of 2005. Panda explained how the threat scenario for computer users changed from the old-fashioned viruses intended to damage computer files with random acts of vandalism, to the new threats that are almost all commercially driven.

Panda Software offers technology security solutions ranging from its free online “Active Scan,” to free-standing antivirus software, to comprehensive security suites complete with antivirus, firewall, anti-spyware, anti-spam, wi-fi protection, and other protective features. Panda has its own proprietary “TruPrevent Technologies” which is designed to protect computers from attack by new and unknown viruses even before the virus signatures can be updated.

Most Panda Software packages can be installed on multiple computers under a single license, and should be considered as a very strong and capable competitor to other better known security products on the market.

Trend Micro <[www.trendmicro.com](http://www.trendmicro.com)> explained the degree and types of security threats facing computer users. Identity theft of various types was discussed as well as the means to detect, protect, and neutralize a wide variety of other computer threats. Threats can come via e-mail, malicious code on websites, from file sharing services, and countless other places.

In order to deal with and protect from a wide variety of threats, Trend Micro demonstrated its flagship product Trend Micro Internet Security 2007 with its integral TrendSecure online services. Previously known under the moniker PC-Cillin, Trend Micro Internet Security 2007 provides protection from viruses, spyware, spam, phishing, and other

forms of attack. Features also include a “fraud defense” to explicitly help protect credit card and other sensitive personal information from being compromised while online.

The 2007 version includes a single license that can be installed on three computers which make it both a qualitative and economical good choice when compared to the other name brand security software titles widely available at retail.

I am a firm believer in good competition and the free enterprise system. As was clearly demonstrated at APCUG and CES, competition drives innovation which in turn provides valuable and tangible benefits to the consumer. We all need antivirus and other flavors of security software on our computers and any of the feisty competitors above can provide a quality product and service at very competitive prices.

If more computer users could have seen what those of us at the APCUG event saw, the security “biggies” would have a lot to fear, because these aggressive “little guys” are providing excellence by innovation and superior service and support at a fair price. Those big guys on the block should be looking over their shoulders, as these little guys are growing stronger by capitalizing on the weaknesses of their larger competitors. Security software should not just be purchased based on the familiarity of the name or brand, but on the quality of the services and support offered. Any of the three products mentioned above would be a good choice for virtually all PC users.

#### **WEBSITES:**

<<http://www.apcug.net>>

<<http://www.pandasoftware.com>>

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

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

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

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## **Moving to Vista—What Not to Do By Sandy Berger**

Microsoft's long-anticipated new operating system, Windows Vista, is finally here. After months of testing I can say that it is a stable program and is more secure than any previous version of Windows. It also has a great new look and some wonderful new features. Just remember that there are always gotchas with a new operating system. Here are a few of the "don'ts" when moving to Vista.

First, five different flavors of Vista are available in the US: Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate, Business, and Enterprise. Don't bother with Home Basic. It doesn't have "Aero," the rich new visual interface. It doesn't have the advanced multi-media features for photos, movies, and television. It doesn't even have the cool new chess or mahjong games. All of this is missing, but Microsoft is still selling the Home Basic upgrade for \$99. The full version of Home Basic is \$199. If you buy a

new computer with Vista, make sure that you get at least the Home Premium version. You can get a comparison of the different versions of Vista and what they offer at the Microsoft website.

Another don't...don't try to upgrade without a large hard drive and at least one gigabyte of memory. You can use the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor to determine if your computer is ready for Vista. Most older computers will come up lacking. So, you may not want to upgrade at all. Although Vista's better security is enticing, if you are happy with your Windows XP machine you may want to keep using it a bit longer because it may be not be economically beneficial to upgrade. The Vista product upgrade can cost several hundred dollars. That plus the cost of extra memory and/or other hardware upgrades may make it wiser to just purchase a new computer with Vista preinstalled.

Don't expect every software program to work with Windows Vista. Intuit, the makers of the popular Quickbooks program have notified their users that no older versions of Quickbooks will run on Vista. Only an upgrade to Quickbooks 2007 will let Quickbooks users run the program on a Vista computer.

Because of the major security changes in Vista, most antivirus programs will also need an update to be able to run on Windows Vista. If you purchase a new computer it may come with a trial subscription to Symantec or McAfee that will get you started but you will have to purchase a new version in the future or move to a free antivirus program. Again upgrading an old computer may be problematic because the old antivirus software



will need to be removed before the new version is installed. Experience has taught me that it is often difficult to remove all the various pieces of an existing antivirus program. This is one experience you may want to avoid.

Some programs will also have trouble with Windows Vista's new user controls which make it more difficult to make changes to your computer. This bolsters the operating system against hackers, but can confuse some existing programs. Simple changes or work arounds for these types of problems can easily be found on the Web. For instance, I couldn't run Adobe Photoshop CS2 upon installation on my Vista machine, but a few simple changes which I found documented on the Web, solved the problem quite easily.

Also any specially written or high-end software programs may not work with Vista. This will not affect the average user, but if you have any unusual or specialty programs you will want to check out compatibility.

Much of today's current hardware will work with Windows Vista. Of course, you may want to check the manufacturer's website to be sure before you make that assumption. You may need to update a hardware driver or two. If you have older hardware, some may not work with Vista. So check it out before you move to Vista.

Of all the hardware problems, you can expect the most problems with audio equipment. Windows Vista has a new audio stack which means that it handles the audio data structure differently than older versions of Windows. Also this audio change was made quite late in the Vista development process, so audio manufacturers may not have caught up

yet. While this will probably not impact the average computer user, if you have any high-end audio equipment, make sure you check compatibility before you migrate to Vista.

One last don't...don't worry about the 64-bit version of Vista. If you have a 64-bit processor on your new computer like the Intel Core2 Duo or AMD 64-bit processors you may be thinking about trying out the 64-bit version of Vista. Don't do it unless you want to be on the "bleeding" edge of technology. Most hardware does not currently have 64-bit drivers and the 64-bit version of Vista does not support the widely used 32-bit drivers. Also there is currently very little software that actually takes advantage of the 64-bit system. So leave the 64-bit version as something to dream about. It will be more secure and faster, but it is not yet ready for prime time.

However the 32-bit version of Vista is ready for immediate use. The best way to move to Vista is to buy a new computer with Vista preloaded. Just be sure you check out these gotchas before you put your money on the counter.

***Sandy Berger's web site, CompuKISS can be accessed at <<http://www.compukiss.com>> or contact at <[sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)>.***

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## **The New, the Best, and the Worst** **By Pim Borman**

### **Computer Globalization**

University and industrial research laboratories in the United States can be proud of having spawned the computer revolution almost single-handedly. AT&T's Bell Laboratories invented the transistor and developed the Unix operating system that in turn formed the basis of DOS and Linux. The C and C++ programming languages originated at Bell Labs also. The basic configuration of desktop computers originated with the IBM PC which in turn was the seed for the current Intel and Microsoft dominance in desktop computers.

The Internet grew out of a collaboration of mostly American researchers, sponsored by universities and government labs. Microsoft's near-monopoly created *de facto* software standards, including the Windows operating system, Web browser, Office programs, and related software. Not surprisingly, even though computers have spread out all over the world, the standards governing their behavior are still strongly American-dominated.

Increasingly, foreign governments are objecting to some of the US-based standards. One bone of contention is ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a California non-profit corporation that manages the assignment of domain names and IP addresses on the Internet. There is widespread feeling that this task should be taken over by an international committee. Also, *de facto* standards imposed by the dominant MS Windows operating systems and

the proprietary nature of its Office software are being challenged with a world-wide move towards Open Source software, including the Linux operating system and notable software such as the OpenOffice suite of office programs.

The latest version of Microsoft Office, Office 2007, uses a different proprietary format, based on the XML hypertext markup language. It is not only incompatible with earlier MS Word and Excel formats, but also with the internationally established standard Open Document Format, equally based on XML. This is regrettable since much documentation generated since computers came in use is already inaccessible in electronic form because of obsolescence.

General acceptance of the Open Document Format is an essential step to avoiding further loss of documentation due to changing technology. There is a growing trend amongst private and governmental organizations to abandon proprietary document formats in favor of international standards. Microsoft may be forced to accept the open Document Format for use with its Office programs sooner or later.

The computer revolution clearly originated in the USA, and we can be proud of that. But now that the technology has spread to the rest of the world, opposition is growing to the continuing domination of American companies and standards. Globalization may have to extend to the acceptance of internationally generated and approved standards.

### **Random Spam**

Have you noticed that a lot of spam lately appears to be totally pointless? Instead of trying to sell pornography, get-rich-quick schemes or ED medication (aka

Viagra), the subject lines and content appear to consist of random words and sentences. Its intent is to neutralize spam filters that depend on keywords such as Viagra to identify and intercept spam. Swamping the Web with these decoys makes it harder to distinguish spam carrying messages from random noise. Same trick as used by Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.

Most of these decoys are sent out by zombie computers, personal and institutional computers lacking adequate firewalls and virus protection, that have been hijacked by spammers and are transmitting spam unbeknownst to the owners. Are you sure yours is not one of them?

### **Free Software**

As long as it has been available, I have been using tax preparation software for the annual IRS ritual. Mostly, I have been using the plain version of Tax Cut, because it has been the cheapest and done the job. Since my tax return is much the same from year to year I used to get irked by the roundabout way Tax Cut forces you to prepare your return.

Last year Tax Cut sent free copies of its program around to previous users and as inserts in PC Magazine, so I just put up with it again. But this year I haven't seen any free copies and decided to try the free Tax Act. It has the reputation of being a solid program, but with less hand holding than Tax Cut and Turbo Tax provide—just what I wanted.

I downloaded the program from [www.taxact.com](http://www.taxact.com) and used it to prepare a provisional return. It worked just as I wanted, straightforward question-and-answer steps, or by directly filling in the forms as preferred. It told me about the tax credit for previously paid federal telephone

taxes and otherwise took care of the calculations and printing the forms. It also offered to file electronically without charge, but I am still waiting for some 1099 forms, and the government still hasn't finalized some of the supporting forms for 2006.

The only minor downside was that it didn't import my personal data from last year's Tax Cut-prepared return, but that was typed in quickly enough. If you really need more help (from J.K. Lasser) you can download the Deluxe version for 9.95, or for 15.95 if you also want it to do the state return.

If you are interested in protecting your computer with a firewall and anti-virus software you might look at the Comodo Group. They offer a completely free firewall program, Comodo.firewall 2.4 that has received good reviews for effectiveness and ease-of-use. They also have Comodo.antivirus that is still in beta, but free for the downloading.

Comodo Group is an organization providing commercial security software worldwide, making it likely that they know what they are doing. They provide this free software, as well as some other free security programs, to improve their name recognition. More power to them! Find out more at <http://www.comodo.com/news/>

*Pim Borman is Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. <http://swipcug.apcug.org/> [swipcug\(at\)sigecom.net](mailto:swipcug(at)sigecom.net).*

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**[Continued on page 21](#)**



**BOARD MEETING**  
**02/11/2007**  
**Carol Sanzi**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Carl Massie, Jr., SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also present was Internet Committee Chairman Mike Bader. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Bette Gay reported that the balance in the treasury as of February 10, 2007 equaled \$7,803.30 with \$3,303.30 in the bank account and \$4,500.00 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 82. It is time for Karl O. Anderson and Julie Comptois to renew their memberships. Tom Callow moved to reimburse Gary DeNise \$63.59 for the purchase of a new coffee pot. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion and it was carried. Carol Sanzi moved to reimburse Gary DeNise \$11.48 for refreshment supplies. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Bader reported that the online SEMCO Yahoo Group's membership stands at 31. He stated that the activity and interest are increasing with new members from Canada and Florida.

Bob Clyne submitted the 2007 budget for review by the board members. Bob Clyne moved for the adoption of the budget as presented.

Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne moved to appoint Bob Clyne, Richard Jackson, Morton Stockler, and Jerry Comtois to the audit committee, subject to their agreement to serve. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Chuck Moery seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.



**Letter From The Old  
Editor—Internet Speed**  
**By Bill Agnew**

The NM Computer Society did a survey of the speeds which members are getting on the Internet. The data come from members who tested their speed using the following free Web site: <<http://speedtestsunrocket.com/speedtest.swf>>. There are also a number of other sites which have such tests. Some sample results from the club are:

**Provider**

**\$/Mo. - Dload Kbps - Upload Kbp**

Comcast Cable		
\$49.95	6122	357
Comcast Cable		
\$49.95	3538	343
Comcast Cable		
\$49.95	5100	350
Cable [Wash]		
???.??	963	236
Qwest DSL/MSN		
\$26.99	182	408
Qwest /MSN		
???.??	1053	303
Qwest/Flashnet		
\$9.95	24	49

Speeds vary with a number of factors, including when you test. I thought you might be interested.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



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



**SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE**  
**Carl Massie, Jr.**

**March 11: Excel Revisited:** Member Bill Landrum first joined SEMCO in February 1980. It was about that time that he first started using spreadsheets (on CP/M originally).

He will talk briefly of his memories of using different brands and versions of spreadsheets from VisiCalc through Excel, but most of the time will be spent in demoing Excel using many of the less well known commands and systems as time and audience patience permits. Built-in functions, pivot tables and simple VBA macros will be included. Bill will use Excel XP or Excel 2003 for the demos, but everything shown should work on Excel systems from Excel 4 (1992) through Excel 2007.

**March 11: Adobe Reader 8:** SIG-IBM Chairman, Carl Massie Jr., will demonstrate Adobe Reader 8. Also, there will be a discussion of techniques, resources, and lessons learned while addressing issues surrounding a "Generic Host Service" error.



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

**April 2, 2007:** (First Monday), 6:45 p.m, 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.**

### **NOVICE-IBM GROUP** **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

**February 11: Help Q & A:**  
Discussion directed by the audience.  
No question is too simple!

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**April 2007 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)**  
**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., March 18, 11:59 p.m.**  
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use [Editor address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: [<machw@att.net>](mailto:machw@att.net). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.  
**Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly.** Contact [Editor \(address Page 2\)](#).

**Warner Mach**[machw@att.net](mailto:machw@att.net)

(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS  
OTHER GROUPS****COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

April 4, 7 p.m., (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187  
<<http://www.bwcomp.org>>.

**DCOM Computer Club**

March 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602.

**MacGroup- Detroit**

March 18, 2:15 p.m.–5 p.m., (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday): Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <[terry@macgroup.org](mailto:terry@macgroup.org)> or 313-571-9817. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

March 17, 11:00 a.m., (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>). Cassie at <[cassiemac@yahoo.com](mailto:cassiemac@yahoo.com)> or 313-971-8743.

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

March 10, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <<http://www.mdlug.org>>. Info: Raymond McLaughlin 248-960-1864.

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

March 8, 7:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Thur.); 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., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Recreation Bldg, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

April 3, 7:30 p.m., (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <[Don@VanSyckel.net](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net)>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>.

**Wayne State University Mac User Group**

March 10, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny McLampy 248-477-0190.

## No meeting in April

Remember that there will not be a meeting in April because of Easter.

### Continued from page 17

*Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*



### February REFRESHMENT DONORS

Gary DeNise, Coordinator  
Gary DeNise  
Kaye Johnson  
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

**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.....[mdbader@flash.net](mailto:mdbader@flash.net)  
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm.....[tcallow@monaghanpc.com](mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com)  
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm.....[clyne@ludden.com](mailto:clyne@ludden.com)  
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime  
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....[scook48227@ameritech.net](mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net)  
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm.....[jvanders@myself.com](mailto:jvanders@myself.com)  
Yuhasz, Steve.....[Help@yuhasz.org](mailto:Help@yuhasz.org)



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

## **SEMCO CALENDAR**

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

**March 11–SUNDAY (Meet 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)**

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

**SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.**

**Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**

**SIG-IBM 1:45 p.m. Program: Excel Revisited:** Member Bill Landrum will discuss his experiences with spreadsheets, in general, and will demo many of the features of Excel, in particular; including built-in functions, pivot tables, and simple VBA macros.

**SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 p.m.** Refreshments! (Reminder: We must continue to maintain a neat environment.)

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

**SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 p.m. Program: Adobe Reader 8:** SIG-IBM Chairman Carl Massie, Jr. will demonstrate Adobe Reader 8. Also, there will be a discussion of techniques, resources, and lessons learned in dealing with a “Generic Host Service” error.

**SIG-ADVANCED, April 2, 2007–MONDAY, 6:45 p.m.,** (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.**

**April 8–No Meeting due to Easter Sunday**

**May 13–Next SEMCO Sunday meeting**

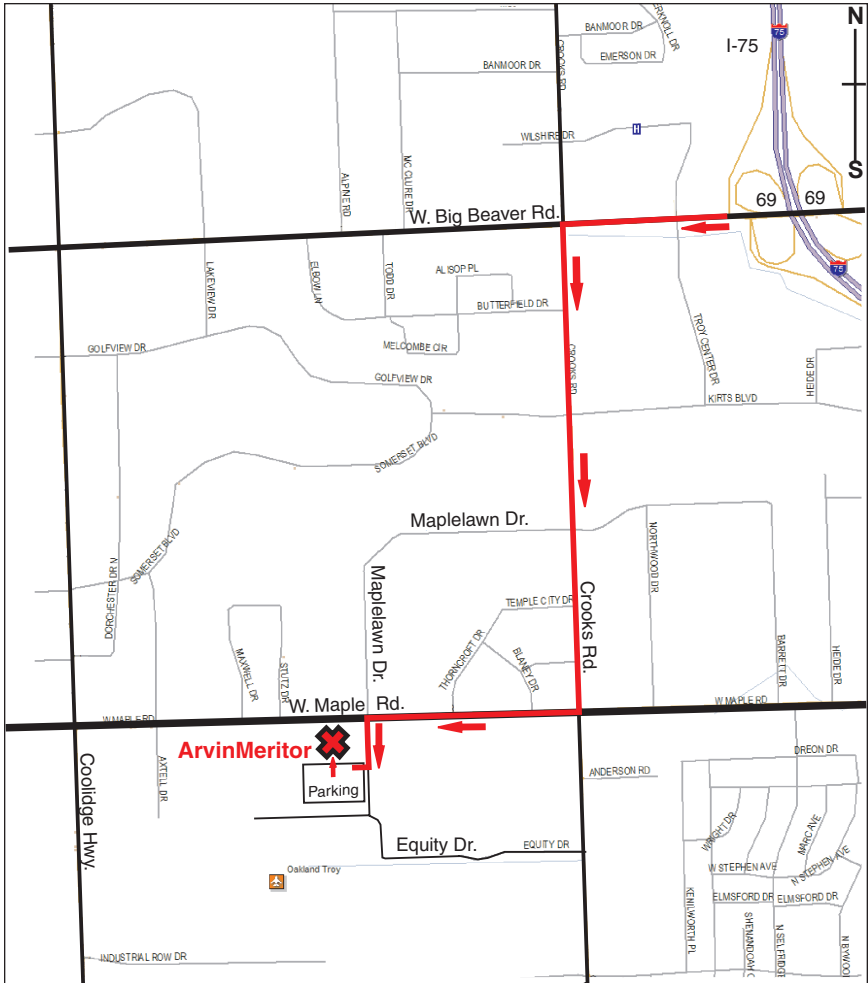
**<http://www.semco.org>**

**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 48064**



**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 Mapelawn 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)**

**March 11**

**April - No meeting**

**May 13**

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