

Official Newsletter  
SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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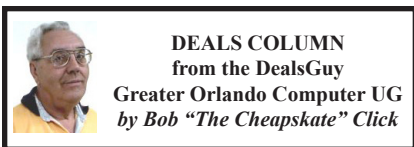
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### **Biometric Lock Update**

I said I was going to return the Kwikset Biometric (fingerprint) Lock for my door because it was very unreliable, but I really liked it and wanted it to work better. I watched the video on their Web site and tried changing my finger scanning technique. It's working better for me and mostly opens on the first scan, but not always. However, my wife still has poor luck so she always uses her key, or waits for me to unlock it. Kwikset had a booth in a hardware show we worked so I asked a rep how to improve my wife's success getting the lock to work. He told me the lock can hold 50 different fingerprints, so, if I didn't need them all for other people, try scanning her finger several times in different ways with the chance that things might go better with more choices for the lock's computer to compare. He said it actually scans the skin makeup, not the fingerprint. It's worth a try!

### **For What It's Worth!**

When I wrote up the USB Medical flash drive deal, my proof reader told me no medic in his right mind would plug it into their laptop, if they even had a laptop in the ambulance, because an unknown device might cause damage to the computer or entire system. It made sense so I talked to a few medics about that and there seems to be varied opinions. One told me that he only looks to see if the patient has a wallet card or medical necklace, and they would not plug anything unknown into their computer. Another medic told me that if she saw the USB device with the

medical logo on it, she would indeed plug it into their laptop to see what it revealed, and that their computer system would not allow any damage. In spite of the varied opinions, most said they would want to see the USB drive's content because the patient's welfare was important. Some said good advice is to post a conspicuous note in your wallet about the device. Would anybody fake a serious injury just to damage computers?

### **Interesting Business**

Bill Shook is the editor of a great newsletter for The Northwest Arkansas PC User Group and I really enjoy reading it each month. He seems to be the editor for life and doesn't mind. I read a very interesting tidbit in their March issue that had me wondering if it was for real, or just an April Fool's joke, considering the month. NWA-PCUG's President, Wes Eckles Jr., starts the NL with the "President's Corner," and in his March Corner, he included an item about "cheap broadband service available from Space Data Corporation by way of shoebox sized transmitter/receivers carried aloft via ten balloons launched each day by ranchers and dairy farmers." Sound fishy to you?

I surprised Bill with a phone call to inquire and he said he also wondered about that, but later was astonished to read it in their local newspaper. He even sent me an article taken from the Wall St. Journal about the company. Here's the URL to read that President's Corner <<http://pcgroup.nwark.com/pres--38.htm>> on their Web site and also the URL <<http://www.spacedata.net/news022008.htm>> to read this interesting article about Space Data Corporation, who also provides data

services for truckers and oil companies. You'll find it fascinating.

The Boca Raton users group just lost their long-time ISP so maybe they should consider this method with various members launching the balloons each day. <G> That's another way to beat the big guys.

Anyway, I had a very interesting visit with Bill Shook and you'd be surprised to know he publishes most of his interesting newsletter using a DOS version of Word Perfect (5.1), but does use MS Windows XP every day. How many editors would you find sticking with their favorite DOS program yet today? I assume his philosophy is "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Sort of like "in with the new," but not necessarily "out with the old." He said that like many other user groups, not many members write articles/reviews for their newsletter any more and is indebted to Judy Taylour for putting the APCUG editor articles together; as well as to APCUG's Ira Wilsker and his articles. He also thanked the "World Renowned DealsGuy."

### **What a Show!**

I worked the Sapphire Show by SAP and it includes the SAP Users Group organization. <<http://www.sap.com/us/sapphire>> It was a large show in the West Concourse of the Orange County Convention Center. All the SAP partners, along with Microsoft and their partners, were there. There was food set up all over the exhibit floor from the time the show opened in the AM to the close at 5 PM. No food concession stands were open in the building. The dock I worked at was one entry point for the food to be brought in so I managed to get a snack more often than I should have.

I visited the exhibit floor briefly twice and it was interesting. I was really curious about what the "War rooms" were that were associated with the IT section. Eric Clapton was the featured entertainer one evening and Tom Brokaw (Legendary ABC newsman) was the speaker another evening. This show usually comes here each year and is attended by people from around the world.

We also worked an IBM show, held at the Dolphin hotel on Disney property. They recently had a show that I didn't get to see, and now this one, which is their Tivoli Pulse08 show. <<http://www.ibm.com/tivoli/pulse08>> Lance Armstrong was one of the featured speakers and Hootie and the Blowfish entertained on the final evening. They packed a lot of exhibitors on the show floor; many had a "booth on a post" (a post with a shelf for equipment) that took up a very small area and the rest of the booths were still quite small. 4000 attendees were expected. IBM has another show there in two weeks; The IBM Rational Software Development Conference.

### **No Announcements With Discounts This Month**

I did receive a number of announcements, but nothing new offering us a product discount. Those will be posted on my Web site. As you can see, my column is mostly personal items that I thought were of interest and I will include some freebies sent to me by readers. I have also seen these in columns published in a few UG newsletters. There are several good monthly "help" articles and I only get a few newsletters, but some of these columns are reprinted in newsletters I do receive. I hope you get some good from these suggestions.

## How About Some Suggestions For Defragging!

This is a freeware defragging utility that was said to be a good product. I have not used it yet, but I'm passing it on to you. It is called SpeedDefrag 5.2.1 and is located at: <<http://www.majorgeeks.com/download4889.html>>. I'm not sure if it's Adware or Freeware. There is also a free Windows Registry Cleaner there, but I don't know how it compares with cCleaner.

### Another Free Defragger

Here is another free Defragging product. Go to <<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software>>. This item was in an article by Joe Shipley, owner of Smart Ideas, a computer consultant firm.

Auslogics also offers two other free products; Registry Defrag and System Information, which gives you data about your computer. There are also some products you must pay for.

### Free Picture Resizer

Resize, shrink and crop your pictures for free. Resize photos before posting them on whatever Web site you choose. <<http://www.picresize.com>> Since I have not tried it, I can't offer much of a description. However, they do the resizing for you right there.

### Analyze Everything In Your PC

Here's a free utility that can be used to analyze and even benchmark your computer. It offers information on hardware, including such things as motherboard, CMOS, processor, memory, the display adaptor, keyboard, mouse and all types of drivers. Also shows any peripheral devices connected (such as printer, multimedia devices) PCI/AGP buses, I/O ports, DMA channels, IRQs, Advanced Power Management, memory, resources,

DirectX, DirectDraw, DirectSound and the list goes on.

They say it's easy to use and offers an attractive interface. See <<http://www.freshdevices.com/freshdiag.html>> to download it. Before you decide, look at the pro and con remarks on <<http://www.download.com>>.

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



**How SPINRITE Saved  
My Life  
By Ira Wilsker**

Spinrite <<http://www.grc.com>> did not really save my life in a literal sense, but it did rescue my computer. Late last night, immediately after installing an early beta (pre-release) version of some security software I am testing for a major software company, my computer was very sluggish; it was difficult to open any files, and very frustrating to use, so I went to Start – Turn Off Computer – Restart to reboot my computer. The shutdown process was inordinately slow, and when the computer restarted, a white font on a black screen said “No bootable partition in table.” I knew I was in trouble.

I routinely beta test pre-production hardware and software for a variety of manufacturers and publishers, typically under an “NDA” (non-disclosure agreement). I am fully cognizant that the process of testing such hardware and software carries a variety of risks, and that the products will not likely be as polished as a final product, and will not likely perform as desired. Part of my job as a beta tester is to report bugs and problems to the proper recipient in order for the bugs to be fixed prior to a public commercial release. Being well aware of the risks, I frequently create restore points on my computer (Start – All Programs - Accessories – System Tools – System Restore) so I can go back to a previous date in case things go wrong, a process I have utilized many times. I also maintain two distinct backup copies of the data on my hard drive, rotating between two external USB hard drives, with a backup utility called Shadow <[www.ntius.com](http://www.ntius.com)> that backs up multiple sequential copies of my critical data files in real-time, and in native format, that needs no third party software to read and restore. I have learned in the past that the three most important words in computing are “Backup, backup, and backup.” Last night, I was darned glad that I keep current backups.

After my desktop computer would not reboot with that awful “No bootable partition in table” error, I knew I was in trouble; I live on my computer, and it is nearly as much of a family member as are my kids! After the initial minutes of panic, I calmed down and tried to approach the problem rationally. Using another computer on my home network, I went to my favorite search engine <[www.AllTheWeb.com](http://www.AllTheWeb.com)> and typed in the phrase “No bootable partition

in table.” The results displayed on the first search page did not bely my fears that something was terribly wrong on my hard drive, but there was a glimmer of hope as I saw that there had been some great successes in resolving the problem and overcoming that specific error using a hard drive utility popular with geeks, Spinrite <[www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm](http://www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm)>. I knew that I had a copy somewhere, as I had written this column on Spinrite a few years ago. I have a large plastic storage box adjacent to my desktop computer, which contains hundreds of CDs and floppies. I was in no mood to go software hunting in that forest of titles. I knew that Spinrite was a download, so there must be a copy on my now useless hard drive. Fortunately for me, I keep all of my downloaded software files in one of two directories on my hard drive, those directories being explicitly backed up by Shadow to both of my external USB hard drives. A glimmer of hope accompanied my smile as I connected one of my external drives to my other computer, and quickly located my registered copy of Spinrite.

Spinrite (download a registered copy for \$29 to \$89, price depending on eligibility), when run from Windows, can be used to create bootable media containing the diagnostic and repair utility. The actual diagnostic and repair program is designed to be run from a bootable device or media, such as a floppy, CD, DVD, or USB flash drive, and not under Windows. The original Spinrite file itself is small, only 140k, and written totally in assembly language. The recovery utility is a bootable file containing a freeware operating system, FreeDOS, which can be used to boot any compatible computer (there are online references

about Spinrite being used to repair hard drives from Mac's and TiVo's that had been connected to or installed in a PC for the purposes of repair). Since my working computer did not have a floppy drive, I decided to make a bootable CD from the backup copy on the external drive. I ran Spinrite, selected the button to create an ISO or IMG file, and then used the Roxio software that came with my computer to create the bootable CD. It should be noted that the ISO file should not simply be burned to a CD in order to make it bootable, but the ISO file needs to be placed on the CD with the "Copy" utility, and selecting the ISO file to be so installed. The process took less than two minutes. It should be noted that this bootable file is quite small, about 1 meg, and will easily fit on just about any compatible device.

With bootable CD in hand, I walked across the room to my sickly computer, placed the Spinrite CD in the drawer, and turned on the computer, allowing it to boot from the CD. A screen briefly appeared showing that it was running on FreeDOS, followed by the Spinrite menu on a screen very reminiscent of an old DOS program. I read over the choices and descriptions, and selected option #2, the repair and recovery option. Spinrite recognized my hard drive and its partitions, and presented the technical information about my hard drive. Following the onscreen prompts, Spinrite started to diagnose each track and sector on my hard drive, indicating on a simple graphical display what it had found, and that it was running an algorithm to correct and recover any errors found. While running, a selection of other screens was presented to show additional information in other display formats. After several minutes, an error

was detected on my hard drive, which Spinrite promptly fixed. After about 30 minutes, Spinrite had completed its diagnosis and repair. I was presented with a screen that said to remove the CD from the drive, and then to "Press ESC to reboot," which I eagerly complied with. Seconds later, the ubiquitous Windows welcome screen appeared, and my computer booted normally! Much relieved, my desktop computer was now alive and well.

After I assured myself that all was well, I proceeded to use the original copy of Spinrite on my now repaired hard drive to create multiple bootable rescue devices, including floppies, CDs, and even a small USB flash drive. I have stored these rescue devices where I can easily find them if the need should arise ever again.

In addition to keeping current backups of all of the critical files on a drive, it would also be a good practice to periodically run the Spinrite diagnostic utilities. By performing this task, hard drive problems can be identified and likely repaired before the drive crashes, sparing the user of the stress and anxieties that I went through. With my late night tension now relieved by Spinrite, I could get a good night's sleep. Thank you Spinrite.

#### **WEBSITE**

[<http://www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm>](http://www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm)

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

*[Editor's Note: This article represents Pim Borman's May 2008 column. His view of Spinrite contrasts somewhat with the view expressed by Ira Wilsker—See the Ira Wilsker column, above].*

### **Tales of Woe**

Sorry, Folks, but this month I can't think of any New and/or Best to report on, only Troubles, with a Capital 'T.' So let's get started.

### **Spinrite 6.**

Son Mike's computer recently refused to boot, and his main concern was the potential loss of some recent data files that he had not yet backed up. Regrettable, but it happens to the best of us - literally. The local school system lost all the students' test results of the current term because the computers crashed. The data were not securely backed up. Whom to blame? No one other than the operator, IBM, symbol of computing excellence. According to the local paper, the IBM representative claimed that this had never happened before and could not be explained. Sound familiar?

Back to Mike. When it was clear that he could not boot from the hard drive, not even in safe mode, the next step was to use a Windows XP setup disc and use its Repair function. Windows labored mightily, trying to repair his drive, but kept getting bogged down with a variety of obscure error messages. At one time he got a DOS prompt that allowed him to list the files on his computer, but when he tried to copy them he was denied access. When we booted his computer with a Live Ubuntu Linux CD he could

also see his precious files, but access was again denied.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. The Windows XP operating system runs on a partition configured in the NTFS format. When data files are saved in that format, Windows XP (and Vista) by default protect those files from access by others. That is a nice safety feature for those who really need it, but it makes the data unavailable over your network, or evidently even from a DOS prompt. You can beforehand designate specific data files to be shared, but it is a lot of bother, easily forgotten. Here is the lesson: store all your data files on a separate partition set up in the older FAT32 format, and they'll be available whenever and wherever you need them. Even better, also back them up to an external drive in FAT32 format.

At this point I remembered reading about a terrific file recovery program, Spinrite 6, available for \$89 from Gibson Research Corporation, owned and operated by Steve Gibson, the well-known computer guru <<http://www.grc.com>>. We downloaded the program and converted it to a bootable disc. After booting Mike's computer with the Spinrite disc it immediately announced that his drive was subject to imminent failure. Well, that's what we spent the \$89 for. We started the file recovery mode, with a warning that this could take a "looong" time, think 24 hours or so.

Several days later, after running something like 60 hours during which the program every so often would get bogged down and had to be restarted, the program had progressed to 93% completion and refused to go any further. No indication that any files were available to be recovered.



Mike installed Windows XP on a new drive and put the old wreck in an external hard drive enclosure connected to a USB port of his computer. The old drive was unreadable at this point. Still unwilling to give up, Mike tried the old standby, Windows' checkdisk with the /F parameter (for "fix") to let Windows try to repair salvageable parts of the drive. It worked! After several repeats of the procedure he was able to recover most of his lost files that meanwhile also had become accessible. So much for Spinrite, mark one up for good old DOS.

### **Acronis**

After creating the Spinrite disc, and before using it on Mike's computer, I tested it on my desktop computer by doing a routine check of my hard drive, expecting it to be in perfect shape. To my surprise Spinrite halted about 5% into the inspection because the hard drive was overheating. Newer serial (SATA) hard drives are equipped with a SMART program that reports many operating parameters of the drive. Windows can't read SMART, but Spinrite can. On inspection I found that the cooling fan for the hard drive compartment was kaput. It was easily replaced by the local people who built my computer, but even then the drive continued to overheat, a clear warning that it may fail any time.

I bought a new 500 GB Maxtor drive (on sale for \$99!) which came with a utility, "MaxBlast" to copy an exact image of my setup to the new disc, avoiding the necessity to reinstall everything. The way it wanted to go about it was to do a three-way partition of the 500 MB drive, similar to the 3 partitions in the old (250 MB) drive, but twice as large. It was going to copy

everything on the old drive to the new drive, including my Linux programs in their partition, with the warning that the Linux system would no longer be bootable. That was not what I had in mind, I just wanted to copy an image of the C: partition from the old to the new drive. Since MaxBlast turned out to be version 10 of disk manager Acronis, I gave Acronis-11 a try in the hope that it would be more flexible. I uninstalled MaxBlast and tried to install Acronis 11, but it balked. I tried to remove all traces of MaxBlast from the Registry, but Acronis still wouldn't install. I uninstalled as much as possible of Acronis and tried to reinstall MaxBlast. No luck—damn. So much for Acronis.

After clean installations of Windows XP and Ubuntu Linux on the new drive, Windows could not find my Internet connection. After struggling several days I finally realized that my motherboard needed to be software-configured and that I did not have the correct drivers. Thanks to the local availability of the guys who originally built the system I got the correct drivers and all was well. Ubuntu never had any problem. It downloaded and installed the required Linux drivers automatically.

### **Ubuntu**

Windows Vista is not the only operating system with compatibility problems on installation. Ubuntu and other Linux distributions have more than their share of installation problems. Most of these appear to be due to proprietary graphics systems for which Linux has no drivers (yet). I have been recommending for years that people ought to start using Linux, but on both occasions where I convinced someone, it turned out that Ubuntu was incompatible with their systems. Computers with integrated

graphics and many laptop computers have low-cost proprietary hardware (made in China) that is attuned to Windows, but unlikely to have Linux drivers. Standard graphics cards from major manufacturers are more likely to have Linux drivers available, and those based on the NVidia chip set have Linux support from the manufacturer.

You can try to run Ubuntu from the CD-ROM without installing it on the hard drive, a so-called “live” installation. If that works, your system is probably compatible and you can proceed with a permanent installation. If it doesn’t work, not much is lost since the distribution is free. In any case, Linux is a large program and requires at least 256 MB of RAM and 10 GB of hard drive space.

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### Bookmarks Page By Hank Pearson

*Obtained from APCUG with the author’s permission for publication by APCUG member groups.*

Wouldn’t it be nice if you could view a searchable webpage of bookmarks for your favorite websites? You can, but why?

#### **Find Bookmarks with Forgotten Names**

One reason to view your bookmarks as a webpage (as an alternative to looking in a menu) is to be able to find sites when you can’t remember the first word in the name.

Let’s say you have a Firefox bookmark named Carbonite Online

Backup, and you can’t remember Carbonite but you know you are looking for the word Backup. On your Bookmarks page (you will soon learn how to view), you can easily search for Backup.

You are using Firefox, aren’t you? If you haven’t discovered Firefox, download it from Mozilla <<http://mozilla.com>>. It’s free, fast, and secure. Make Firefox your default browser.

#### **View Bookmark Descriptions and Tags**

Another reason for a bookmarks page is to give you plenty of room to view (and find) descriptions of your bookmarks. You will learn how to add tags to improve your searches.

#### **Zoom In and Out**

A third reason to display your bookmarks on a webpage is to allow you to zoom the text in and out so you can see it clearly. To zoom any webpage, press Ctrl+Plus or Ctrl+Minus, using the numeric keypad.

#### **DIY for Fun and Learning**

So, how do you display your bookmarks as a webpage? You could download a tool to do the work for you, or download a tool to search bookmarks. But it’s easy enough to DIY (Do It Yourself). It’s interesting, fun, and educational. Are you just using your computer to perform certain tasks, or do you also enjoy learning by experimenting? If you like to learn, this tip is for you.

#### **Find the Bookmarks File**

You don’t need to create a bookmarks webpage. It already exists on your own hard drive! The name of the file is simply bookmarks.html. Press Win+F to find it. (While holding down the Windows key (next to Alt), press F, for Find.) In the left window pane, click ‘All Files and Folders.’ In ‘All or part

of the file name, type 'bookmarks.html' (without quotes). Click Search.

If you get multiple results, it's easy to determine which bookmarks.html file to use. It's the newest one. In the View menu (of your Search Results window), click Details. In the right window pane, click the Date Modified column header (to sort the list). The file you are interested in has the newest date and time (for a file with the Type shown as Firefox Document).

### **Bookmark the Bookmarks File**

Double-click that newest bookmarks.html Firefox Document to open it in Firefox. Press Ctrl+D to bookmark the bookmarks.html file. In the Name field, insert a hyphen (-) at the beginning (to name the bookmark '-Bookmarks'), so this new bookmark will appear at the top of the list.

Now, with your Bookmarks page displayed, press F5 to refresh the view. (F5 is a common shortcut key for Refresh.) Surprise? The new '-Bookmarks' bookmark is at the bottom not the top. Let's address that. (This is Firefox 2.0.0.11. Future versions might vary.)

### **Create Another Top Bookmark**

First, create another bookmark that will be displayed at the top. For example, open Google.com, press Ctrl+D, and name the bookmark -Google (starting with a hyphen).

### **Sort Your Bookmarks**

Now, in the Bookmarks menu, right-click any bookmark, and click Sort by Name. Look in the Bookmarks menu to confirm that the bookmarks are indeed sorted. Note the two bookmarks that begin with hyphen (-) at the top of the menu.

Look at your Bookmarks page again, and press F5 to Refresh. The new bookmarks are still at the bottom.

### **Rearrange Your Bookmarks**

To force Firefox to rearrange your bookmarks page move a bookmark in the menu. In the Bookmarks menu, drag, for example, either new bookmark that starts with a hyphen up or down to precede or follow the other bookmark that starts with a hyphen. (Having two hyphen-prefixed bookmarks lets you rearrange those two at the top without rearranging the other bookmarks.) Press Escape to close the menu.

Refresh your Bookmarks page with F5. The bookmarks on the webpage are now arranged as shown in the Bookmarks menu. (Do you need to refresh three times? No, we simply demonstrated that the bookmarks.html file is rearranged when you move a bookmark in the menu.)

### **Finding Bookmarks on the Page**

When you are viewing your Bookmarks webpage, press Ctrl+F for Find. Type Backup, for example, and press Escape (to close the Find toolbar). To find the next occurrence of Backup, press F3. (F3 is a common shortcut key for Find Again.) When you find the desired bookmark (link), click it (or Ctrl+click to open the site in a new tab). (Or press Enter, or Ctrl+Enter to open the site in a new tab.)

### **Add Descriptions and Tags**

To add or change descriptions of your bookmarks, in the Bookmarks menu, right-click the bookmark you want to edit, and click Properties. In the Description field, type anything (including your own tags) that might help you find your bookmark and remember what it is for. After clicking OK and pressing F5 (for Refresh), you

will see your new Description in the Bookmarks page.

### **Make Changes through the Menu**

Now that you know where bookmarks.html is located, you might be tempted to edit it directly with a text editor. Mozilla warns that it is automatically generated, so do not edit it, as your changes would be lost. Make your changes through the Bookmarks menu.

Displaying your Bookmarks as a webpage is a start in discovering many more tips and tricks related to Firefox.

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### **Microsoft Offers Free "SYSINTERNALS" Utilities By Ira Wilsker**

Every time I boot my computer, a small utility named "System File Defragmenter" (pagedfrg.exe) runs early in the boot process before Windows loads, and defragments critical system files and registry entries. This defragmentation saves some memory, and makes a nominal improvement in system performance; the entire process only takes a few seconds. Periodically, I run another small utility, "Autoruns,"

which shows all of the programs and files that automatically load at boot, not just in the system startup (which it displays), but also scheduled tasks, Internet Explorer components, Windows Explorer components, and about 15 other areas that most users were unaware that they even existed. By carefully unchecking a box, the selected item will not load at the next boot. It should be noted that items may be later reenabled by checking the boxes (unless explicitly deleted by the user). Since there is a chance that the non-expert user may unknowingly uncheck something important, it would be a good idea to create a restore point before fooling with this utility (Start – All Programs – Accessories – System Tools – System Restore). Dozens of other free small utilities are available that would warm the heart of any geek.

These utilities, currently owned by Microsoft, are the creation of Mark Russinovich, who along with his small team of highly talented programmers, produced an admirable collection of freeware utilities. Originally distributed as the "Sysinternals" collection <<http://www.sysinternals.com>>, Sysinternals was purchased a few years ago by Microsoft, who currently administers the distribution and development of the software. These utilities are not for the novice or other inexperienced user, but instead provide a wealth of power and control to those who knowingly like to tweak their systems.

The utilities are easy to locate, and fast to download. Going to the [www.sysinternals.com](http://www.sysinternals.com) website will actually open a Microsoft Tech Net page. On the left of the page is a directory of categories; the right of the page shows the most popular downloads,

and the center of the page gives the details of the selected programs. The categories of the utilities displayed are "Sysinternals Suite," "Utilities Index," "File and Disk Utilities," "Networking Utilities," "Process Utilities," "Security Utilities," "System Information," and "Miscellaneous Utilities." The "Sysinternals Suite" is an "all you can eat" selection (about 8mb zip file), that contains 95 files, which include almost all of the utilities available in a single download. My personal preference was to download this single zip file, and uncompress (unzip) it into a newly created directory I named C:\SysInternals. Uncompressed, all 95 files take up about 21mb of hard drive space. Now I have them all at my fingertips, ready to experiment with or use at my discretion.

In my opinion, computer security trumps all other computer activities. The "Sysinternals Security" page lists nearly 20 security utilities. One utility that I recommend to all users is the "Rootkit Revealer." While we have all heard of viruses, worms, and Trojans, which contemporary antivirus software can detect, we may not be aware that there is another devious threat which may hide in our registry, memory, or other locations beyond the scanning ability of our antivirus software. These nefarious threats are called Rootkits, and they are presenting us with an ever increasing threat to our computing safety and security, which are not likely to be otherwise detected. Another security issue we often face is how we securely delete unwanted files containing sensitive personal information. The program "SDelete" will "Securely overwrite your sensitive files and cleanse your free space of

previously deleted files using this DoD-compliant secure delete program."

The category "File and Disk Utilities" also contains 20 utilities, with some redundancy with the other categories. Some of the simpler utilities are "DiskView," which graphically displays the contents of the hard drive; "Disk Usage" which displays disk usage by directory; the aforementioned "PageDefrag" which defragments critical paging and system files as well as registry hives at each boot; and a variety of other utilities.

"Networking Utilities" consists of eight utilities; the one that I use the most of this group is "Whois," which displays the owners of a URL or other Internet address. "Process Utilities," a collection of 16 utilities, assists the user in determining what processes are actually running on the machine. I frequently use "Autoruns" to display and manage the programs that start automatically when the computer is booted. Other Process Utilities are technical in nature, but very useful to those who really want to know and control what is running on the computer.

The "Sysinternals System Information Utilities" is a collection of 18 utilities (some of the utilities also appear in other categories), that appropriately provide system information. These utilities include a system clock program, a file monitor, a process explorer and monitor, "PsInfo" which provides comprehensive system information, a registry monitor, and other useful software gadgets.

There are 14 "Miscellaneous Utilities" which can serve a variety of functions, including viewing and editing active directories, "Autologon" to bypass the password screen during

logon, “BgInfo” which generates a desktop background that displays detailed and important information about the computer and its configuration, a converter that converts between hexadecimal (hex) and decimals, “RegJump” a regedit (registry manager) utility, “ZoomIt” to zoom images on the screen, and several other programs.

Users of Sysinternals can choose to download programs a’ la’ carte after reading about which functions each one serves, or can be downloaded as one large suite. A small number of programs, mostly for older operating systems, are not included in the suite. Microsoft recently created a webpage where the utilities can be downloaded directly, without the overhead of a graphical interface, at [live.sysinternals.com](http://live.sysinternals.com).

Most of these programs will be of little use to anyone except experienced technical computer users. For those geeks, Sysinternals can provide a wealth of free utilities.

#### WEBSITES

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

<<http://live.sysinternals.com>>—Direct downloads

*Ira Wilsker is an APCUG director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Program Director of Management Development at the Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont TX; and a radio and TV show host. Contact him at <[iwilsker@apcug.net](mailto:iwilsker@apcug.net)>.*

**SPORE:** Electronic Arts has released 'Spore Creature Creator.' Limited version free at <<http://www.spore.com>>. Full version available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for \$9.99.

### Why I Like the Ubuntu Operating System By Phil Vogel

*Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.*

My interest in alternative operating systems started 20 years ago when I worked for the State of Maryland during a year of computer chaos. We had a good office system using WordPerfect but some high State official(s) made a decision to go with Microsoft Word. At our facility WordPerfect was no longer funded and we were no longer able to use it. Yet our mental facility didn't have the budget to buy all the copies for all of our computers, only a few.

Thus my co-workers and I became interested in alternative sources of software. One of the writing programs that we used was the predecessor of OpenOffice and not very good. And because of the high prices charged for an inferior product (Word compared to WordPerfect) at the time, we looked to finding an alternative Operating System to Microsoft products. I remember investigating Red Hat distribution of Red Hat Linux at the time. But at the time it was not up to par with Microsoft's Windows 95.

When I joined OMUG, I was delighted to find that there was a Linux SIG. “Linux” is a term for many operating systems (OS) using the Linux “kernel” or “heart” or “engine.” The kernel “drives” the system like a car engine powers a car. Conrad Schuler, one of the leaders of the Linux SIG was promoting SUSE, a “distribution” of Linux which originally came from Germany. Paul Braget, another leader,



liked Ubuntu. When joined, I found I was totally lost. However, I stuck it out and some of the understanding and data is beginning to stick to the walls of my mind.

I listened, worked on the Linux programs on the computers in the Senior Center, and became convinced that I wanted to try it out for myself. I like laptops. I can grab a computer and move it to a room or across the country easily. In this country all computers are Microsoft friendly but only some brands and some models of the other brands such as Dell are Linux-compatible.

I decided after some research to take a chance on a new Toshiba Qosmio. We had difficulty installing SUSE and because of inexperience it became corrupted. However, it was easier to install Ubuntu.

“Ubuntu” is a South African word which means, “I am because you are.” I am writing this article because you are here, OMUG. I am using Ubuntu because a lot of people around the world contribute to its innovation, maintenance, and security. By the way, the Toshiba came with Windows Vista Home Edition. I only use it for QuickBooks; that is, I can boot into Vista when I need to, but use Ubuntu most of the time

I use Ubuntu to surf the web because it has a very secure hard kernel. It is almost impossible to attack a Linux based machine because all the software programs are attached to the outside of the kernel. At most a particular program will become dysfunctional but not the operating system. For this reason about 90 percent of the servers around the world use Linux based software. Some servers are so reliable that service is minimal.

The Linux kernel is simple, clean and fast, allowing me to turn it on and be on the web in a fraction of the time required by my Windows machine. My web browser is FireFox, an excellent free program.

I am writing this article with OpenOffice because it is another excellent writing program that is on a par with Microsoft Office. And it is a free program also. I must admit that Microsoft’s “Access” program is superior to OpenOffice’s “Data.”

All the above programs are “open source” which means that you can obtain them for free by a download, or on DVD or CD for a nominal charge. However, there are also companies that will supply a person with disks, manuals and service contract just like Microsoft. But everyone is bound by the EULA of the “open source” contract, including companies and also users like me. For instance anyone who comes up with a change or improvement must make it available to any one else for free.

So this is why I like Ubuntu, FireFox and OpenOffice. I also use other features such as watching movies, burning DVD’s, and WiFi—and they work well. Now I want to edit and burn a home made movie. Plus Ubuntu has an extensive Internet support system. New programs and updates are coming out all the time. It is an example of a technology rising up from the grassroots rather than from the top down.

***Phil Vogel is Director at Large for the Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washinton. <<http://www.oly mug.org>>. E-mail <[director3\(at\)oly mug.org](mailto:director3(at)oly mug.org)>.***

***This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member***

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## *Meeting Pictures*



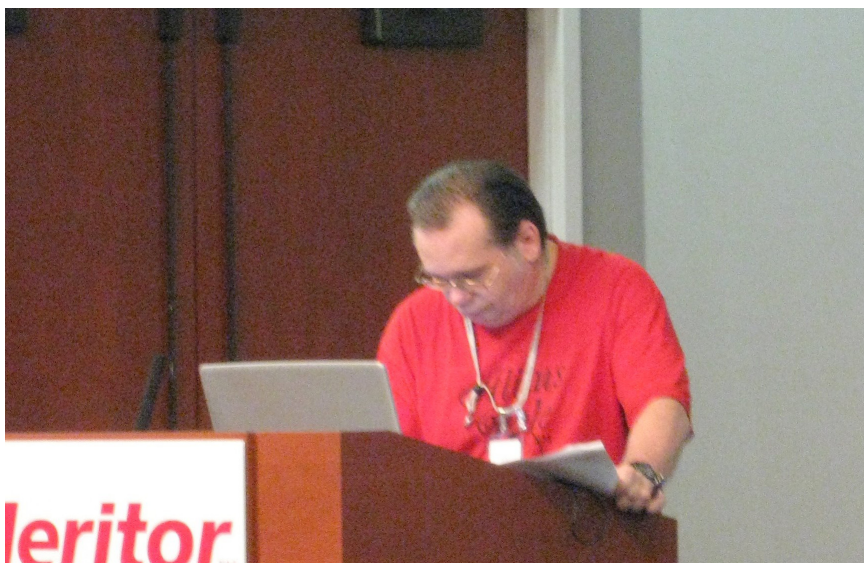
**(Above) Rick Schummer talks about SnagIt at the June Meeting. (Below)  
An informal discussion with Mr Schummer.**



## *Meeting Pictures*



**(Above): A problem with the network leads Tom Callow to take drastic action. A videocam attached to a PC points to the screen of a Mac that has a Verizon air card. (Below): Mike Bader discusses Yahoo Groups.**



**eritor**



**BOARD MEETING**  
**6/8/2008**  
**Carol Sanzi**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also attending was past President Gary DeNise. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Bette Gay reported that the amount in the treasury equaled \$9,043.09 with \$4,381.80 in the bank account and \$4,661.29 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 72.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Richard Jackson \$17.89 for refreshment supplies. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

It is time for Jerry Comptois, Al Gruber and Pat Kreiling to renew their memberships.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Bader reported that the Yahoo on-line user group has grown to 46 members. Activity continues to grow.

Tom Callow reported that 27 members have signed up to receive the SEMCO e-mail announcements. Six of the e-mail announcements were undeliverable. Tom Callow will make a request at the general meeting that those wishing to receive the e-mail announcements should let him know. Those wishing to unsubscribe to the e-mail announcements should reply with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

The announcements will be sent to all the SEMCO media contacts until they unsubscribe.

Bob Clyne suggested that should a membership expire, the e-mail announcements could continue for a few months, but not indefinitely.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Chuck Moery seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

**SEMCO E-mail Updates**

Your Board of Directors is constantly seeking ways of enhancing your membership benefits. One example of this is that many SEMCO meetings are now available as podcasts on the <<http://www.semco.org>> website.

SEMCO is beginning a program of providing e-mail updates of SEMCO activities during the month. Such updates would provide:

- \* Information about past meetings;
- \* Reminders about upcoming meetings and last-minute changes to meeting topics.
- \* Other information about the computers that we feel would be of interest to our members.

We are sensitive about the number of unsolicited e-mail messages that our members receive daily and do not want to add to them. Our e-mail update program will be provided on purely a voluntary basis.

An initial e-mail explaining the e-mail update program was sent to all members on record with a valid e-mail address. If you did not receive such an

**[Continued on Page21](#)**

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



**SIG-IBM**  
**Tom Callow**

**July 13: 1:45 p.m. Adobe Photoshop Elements 6.0:** G. Wm. Buchanan, FPSA, FGDC, will show some of the features of Photoshop Elements 6.0. He will include live demonstrations on using the feature called “Photomerge” which creates panoramas. He will also demonstrate the various ways of using the Image Editor from the basic to advanced methods. He will show the power of the file storage and management system and the various ways of sharing your images via the Internet or printing at home or a third party printer. Mr. Buchanan is Chairman of the Electronic Imaging Division of Detroit’s Photographic Guild

### **SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE**

**July 13: 3:45 p.m. 64-bit Windows in a 32-bit world:** Tom Callow, as guest speaker will discuss the trials and tribulations of trying to install and use the 64-bit versions of Windows XP and Windows Vista.

### **June Meeting Notes**

Mike Bader’s notes from the June SIG-IBM Intermediate presentation, “Using Yahoo Groups,” can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/6ered2>.

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

**July 13: 3:45 p.m.:Help Q & A:** Discussion directed by the audience. No question is too simple! Note: The Novice-IBM Group is ‘by request.’ If you have special questions for this group then speak to one of the officers to schedule the session.



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

**August 4, 2008: . 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.

**August 2008 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**  
**SEMCO Input and Members’ Ads—Deadline: Sun., August 17, 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](#)).



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

(No meeting), 7 p.m., (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen <[compinfo@hughes.net](mailto:compinfo@hughes.net)>. <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. No meetings in July & August.

**DCOM Computer Club**

(No meeting) 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. No meeting in July.

**HUG (Holly User Group)**

July 12, 9:00 a.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

**MacGroup- Detroit**

July 20, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <[terry@macgroup.org](mailto:terry@macgroup.org)> or 248-569-4933. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: "Tips & Tricks about what makes Leopard so great with Mail, Safari, the Finder & More."

**MacTechnics. (MAC User Group)**

(No meeting) 11:00 a.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. No meeting in July.

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

July 12, 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. Topic: TBA.

**MUG (Michigan User Group)**

July 8, 6:00 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday); MUG meetings are at The Farmington Community Library–Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topic: TBA. Next: Aug 12

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

July 10, 7:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Thur.); Westview Office Park, 26100 American Dr., Suite 100, Southfield MI. 48034. Avi Drissman 248-232-7865. Web: <<http://www.themichiganapple.com>>. Topic: TBA.

**Oak Park Computer Club**

Every Fri., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Recreation Bldg, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

**Royal Oak Computer Club**

Every Wed., 12:30 to 2:30 PM at Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marais Ave., Royal Oak, 48073. Near Crooks & 13 Mile. Guest speakers & regular monthly speakers. <<http://www.geocities.com/royaloakcomputerclub/ourpage.html>>

**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

(No meeting), 7:30 p.m. (1<sup>st</sup> Tues); 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>>. No meetings in July & August.

**Wayne State University Mac User Group**

(No meeting), 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); at 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. No meeting in July.

## Continued from Page 15

*groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).*

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e-mail, it is possible that you do not have an e-mail address on file in your member profile or the e-mail address is out of date. To correct your profile please send a message with the correct information to the SEMCO treasurer, Bette Gay, at: [rgay@voyager.net](mailto:rgay@voyager.net). If you did receive the initial message and did reply with "subscribe" then welcome aboard.

If you did not receive the initial e-mail, please request the most recent example by e-mailing to [semco@wowway.com](mailto:semco@wowway.com) or [semco@semco.org](mailto:semco@semco.org). To get on the mailing list you can reply to the example e-mail that will be returned, using the word "subscribe" in the subject line. If you wish us to use a different e-mail address, please include

that e-mail address in the subject line along with the word "subscribe."

We hope that you will find our messages helpful and informative. If in the future you decide that you no longer wish to receive e-mail messages from us, you may send us an e-mail requesting to be removed from our distribution lists and we will stop sending messages to you.



### 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 Network:** Yuhasz

**Quicken:** Clyne

**Geocaching:** Cook

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm.....	<a href="mailto:mdbader@flash.net">mdbader@flash.net</a>
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm .....	<a href="mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com">tcallow@monaghanpc.com</a>
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm .....	<a href="mailto:clyne@mich.com">clyne@mich.com</a>
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime	
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....	<a href="mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net">scook48227@ameritech.net</a>
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm .....	<a href="mailto:jvanders@myself.com">jvanders@myself.com</a>
Yuhasz, Steve.....	<a href="mailto:Help@yuhasz.org">Help@yuhasz.org</a>



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

## **SEMCO CALENDAR**

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

**July 13–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)**

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

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

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

**SIG-IBM** 1:45 p.m. **Program: Adobe Photoshop Elements 6.0:** G. Wm. Buchanan, FPSA, FGDA; Chairman of the Electronic Imaging Division of Detroit's Photographic Guild, will show some of the features of Photoshop Elements 6.0. This will include "Photomerge" to create panoramas, the use of the Image Editor, file storage and management, sharing images via the Internet, and issues related to printing .

**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. **64-bit Windows in a 32-bit world:** Tom Callow, as guest speaker, will discuss the trials and tribulations of trying to install and use the 64-bit versions of Windows XP and Windows Vista.

**SIG-ADVANCED, August 4, 2008–MONDAY, 6:45 p.m.,** 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.

**August 10–SEMCO Sunday**

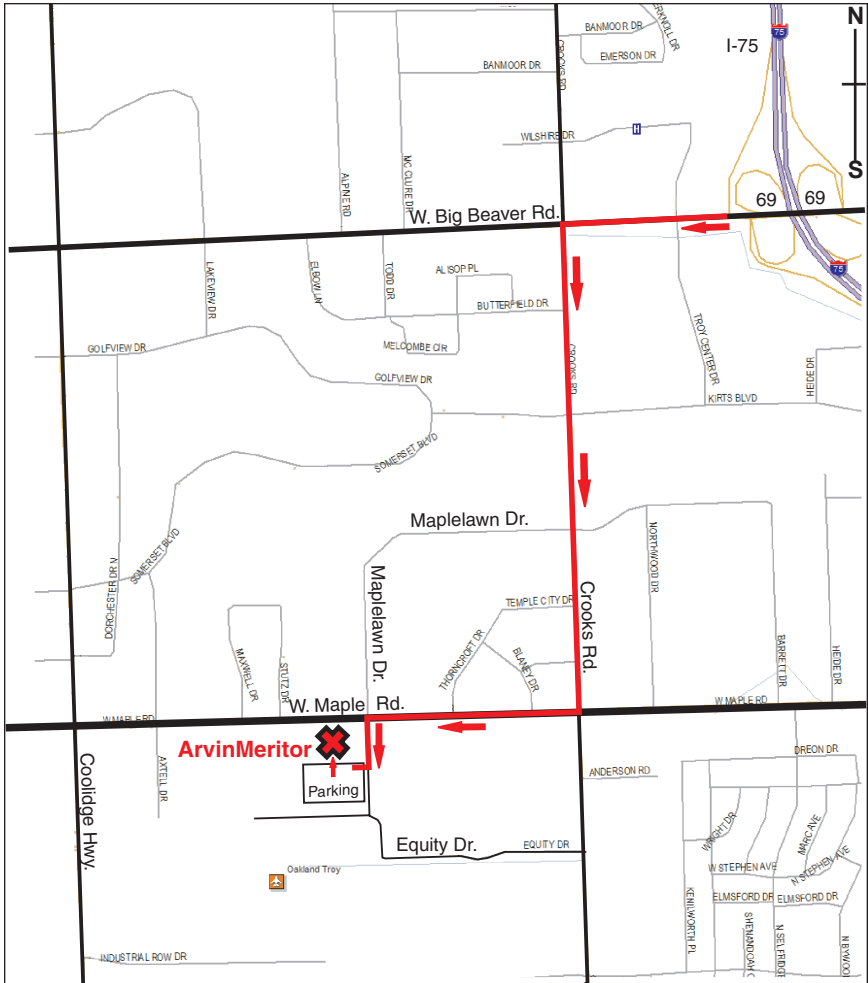
**<http://www.semco.org>**

**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 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)**

**July 13**

**August 10**

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Helping People for the 21st Century**