SEMCO

DATA BUS

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IN THIS ISSUE

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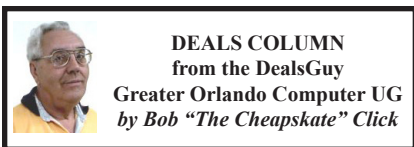
While working the IBM Rational Software Development Show, I visited with the guys maintaining the registration, cyber café and the classroom setup. They told me they were using VMware for the classrooms and one actual machine could support three or four virtual machines. Since each training class was for a different purpose, some virtual machines were set up for different applications. I assume that the best reasons for using virtual machines is the hardware saving, less heat and lower power consumption, which all translates to lower costs.

In another conversation, I had noticed that security people were not scanning the badges of attendees entering the exhibit floor, but there was electronic equipment there. I asked if there were RFID chips in the badges and they confirmed there were. When an attendee passes through the entrance, the RFID chip in his badge is detected and the data is recorded for various purposes. The technician also mentioned that while on the show floor, the attendee could also be tracked when he was near an exhibit. As the RFID chip nears the booth exhibit, a sensor detects it and even would know the time duration the person was at the exhibit. I assume that service would cost the exhibitor.

He told me the attendee could opt out of the RFID chip when filling out the registration form, but only about 1% do that. I wonder how many people who are always in a hurry to fill out the application even noticed that option on the form. I would prefer not to be tracked.

Are You Interested In A Second Life?

At a Central Florida Computer Society meeting <http://www.cfcs.org> Hewie Poplock and Mike Ungerman did a fascinating presentation on having meetings on the Net instead of in person, or even a combination of both. They used two projectors so the audience could see both laptop screens and what each presenter saw on their own screen. The displays sometimes included another member who joined them from his home. The presentation had a few glitches because they had not worked with it a lot, but Hewie and Mike are experts who will work out the bugs and refine the process to make it work.

They also demonstrated Dimdim <http://www.dimdim.com>, a free Web Working conference site, Paltalk <http://www.paltalk.com> where you can videoconference with up to 10 people, or voice and type chat to hundreds in public or private rooms, and Microsoft Live Meeting. They said the Association of PC User Groups is presently negotiating with Microsoft to obtain a license for Live Meeting for every APCUG user group and that there are several more applications that facilitate video chatting or conferencing; including a new Adobe site <http://www.acrobat.com> where you can try "Connect Now," presently in Beta testing. Here is a comparison Web site. <http://hewiep.googlepages.com/cfcs20080615>.

Along the way, they also threw in a little about "Second Life," a Web site that seems to have become a fascination for some folks and perhaps a sort of addiction for others <http://www.secondlife.com>. At "Second Life' you

create a new, but virtual, life of your own, even creating and building just about any virtual item you wish. Second Life seemed limitless and you can buy virtual items, or sell virtual items you have constructed, using "Linden dollars." Some "residents" of Second Life have actually been able to earn a lot of real dollars by converting Linden Dollars into U. S. currency at L250=$1. It was all completely new to me and the traffic on that Web site is tremendous. Hewie has a friend who spends up to 10 hours a day on the site.

Just Paste In A Note

How often do you want to write something down for future reference while you're working on a project? Probably more than you realize. Flashnote can be helpful when you work with text and Flashnote is absolutely free software so it's easy to take a look at it. Whether you're recording a telephone number, saving a URL to reuse, or just copying pieces of text for editing, you could use a personal information manager or some other program for creating and saving text, but most of those options are slow. Flashnote is small, quick and convenient so here is a way to save time. <http://softvoile. com/flashnote/?s=news4.5>

Keep Track Of Everything With This One!

Remembering all the things that have been planned can be a major nuisance, and when important tasks get neglected it can be really serious so here is a personal information manager. EfficientPIM Software announces the release of EfficientPIM version 1.61, the newest upgrade for its flagship tool, enabling you to maintain and secure personal information, make task lists and schedules, write notes, memos and even diaries to immortalize your memoirs. All this information can be password protected. With the Password Manager, you need to remember only one password to be able to record and find the others.

The Calendar display, Edit Note and Desktop Note functions have been improved from the previous version. You can literally stick some important notes on the desktop the way you do adhering paper notes to the fridge. EfficientPIM relieves your business life, enabling you to record, not only the information about your contacts, but all the events or appointments connected with them. The patented embedded search engine allows you to perform comprehensive searches, enabling you to find every piece of information you once recorded to the program.

EfficientPIM runs under Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista and costs $39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. A coupon code "EFFI-OMRW" gives user group members a 20% discount. Enter the coupon code in the EfficientPIM purchase page. This coupon code expires on Oct. 31, 2008. Licensed users are entitled to free updates and priority technical support for 24 months. More information is available at <http://www.efficientpim. com/>.

Direct download link: <http://www.efficientpim.com/download/EfficientPIM-Setup.exe>

Sib Icon Editor Goes Freeware

SibCode announces the release of Sib Icon Editor 4.0. The new version of this renowned icon editor is now being offered at no charge, and is available under a freeware license. Sib Icon Editor is a fast and lightweight image-editing tool designed for creating and editing

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icons, toolbars, navigation buttons, small logotypes and similar graphics. Fitting the niche between simplistic Windows Paint and the almighty Adobe Photoshop, Sib Icon Editor offers small-graphics designers a way to unleash creativity without the steep learning curve.

Sib Icon Editor supports icons, toolbars, logos and other graphics of any size, color depth or aspect ratio. Both 16 and 256-color images are supported while 32-bit graphics gets alpha-channel support for creating images with no edge jaggedness. The alpha-channel comes in handy when adding semi-transparent shadows that look extremely effective on Windows XP and Vista. Sib Icon Editor offers a choice between a number of pens, sprays and paintbrushes. There is the usual bucket tool for filling the void, and there are gradients and chess fills to quickly achieve desired effects.

Only a few clicks will add a translucent or opaque shadow, modify opacity, colors, and gamma. Disabled icons are typically grayscale, so there is a tool for that as well. Tools for smoothing, inverting and colorizing images are also available. The resulting image can be saved in ICO, ICPR, BMP, JPEG or PNG formats. Sib Icon Editor can also convert Mac icons into Windows format.

Sib Icon Editor is available for free at <http://free-icon-editor.com/>

Beep Beep What??

I had some space left and would normally include some kind of freebie, but here is a tip I found in "Nuggets from Nuvo" by Joe Nuvolini, a great monthly column in the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society newsletter, Bits Of Bytes <http://ppcompas.apcug.org>. What's your state of mind when your computer does not come to life, but instead only gives you certain beeps? File this information away where you can lay your hands on it if, some day, that happens instead of booting. What do those beeps mean? Visit <http://networking.ringofsaturn.com/PC/beep.php> to get a list of the beeps. I wish my readers could read all the newsletters that I see for the valuable bits of information they contain. Not that I would know what to do with that information, but some of you might.

That's it for this month. I'll have some other 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 at bellsouth dot net>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.

**My Favorite FREE PC Utilities - Part 1
By Ira Wilsker**

We are all faced with the increasing prices of fuel and food, and the negative impact those higher expenses are having on our household budgets. While there are some items of elastic demand where we can cut back to save some money, there are other inelastic items where our demand is somewhat fixed, and we must bear that expense. Fortunately there is at least one place where we can reduce our expenses dramatically, while maintaining a reasonable quality

of life and productivity, and that is to use some of the many free software utilities available rather than their sometimes pricey commercial counterparts. From a strictly personal viewpoint, I can emphatically state here and now that I use a lot of free software on my computer, and I do not feel that I am missing any significant functionality compared to some of the commercial software available.

I have recently monitored my software usage, and have found that there are several free utility programs that I use, often to the exclusion of their commercial competitors, many of which I also own. The free utility that I use most frequently is the very popular IrfanView <http://www.irfanview.com>, an integrated digital image editor and multi-format media player. According to the author, Irfan Skiljan, over a million copies have been downloaded each month since 2003. IrfanView has frequently been listed as the most popular download on many of the canonical software download services, corroborating its popularity.

What makes IrfanView such a popular program is its features and power. IrfanView can read and edit almost every known digital still image format, and if necessary convert images to any other formats. Although my digital camera came with a commercial photo editor, by my free choice I use IrfanView almost exclusively to edit my digital photos. I also have the program set up as my Windows default to display still images for every format listed. IrfanView allows for very easy image resizing, cropping, rotation, color management and adjustment, red-eye reduction, special effects, and a variety of other editing functions. This program

also has the ability to create self-executing slide shows, where images can be selected, background music or other audio may be optionally inserted, and the combined images converted into an ".exe" executable file that can be copied, e-mailed, or played on any PC without the installation of any other software. I tried this feature using my daughter's wedding pictures, and in less than three minutes I had produced a sequential slide show of the wedding.

Special effects can be added to any image by clicking on IMAGE – EFFECTS on the toolbar. Individual special effects can be selected (with an EDIT – UNDO available), or different effects can be previewed using an integral special effects browser (shortcut ctrl-E) where the original image is shown on the left, and the special effects displayed on the right. Many of the effects are user selectable variable, where the user can control the degree of the effects by using a slider on the screen. I also use IrfanView with my scanner; it is TWAIN compliant, and can operate almost all scanners, importing the images directly into the software for editing. Another feature I frequently use, including for the authoring of this column, is the "screen capture" function, found at OPTIONS – CAPTURE/SCREENSHOT (shortcut "c"). I use the F-11 key to capture the screen image directly into the program, where it can be edited, and then saved into any desired format. Almost all of the images included with my weekly columns were captured using IrfanView. Images can be converted directly into desktop wallpaper by clicking on OPTIONS – SET AS WALLPAPER, with the choice of using the image as centered (my personal choice), tiled,

or stretched to fit the screen. Using IrfanView, I have helped countless users post grandchild, pet, and other desired images as wallpaper.

IrfanView is not just a powerful image viewer and editor, but with its companion "PlugIns" installed, this utility can play almost every contemporary audio and video format. First, the user must download and install the main IrfanView program; the PlugIns file can then be downloaded and installed. Once installed, IrfanView can be optionally selected as the default viewer for videos and audio. I use IrfanView, with the plugins installed, almost exclusively to view videos sent to me, and to play any audio that I may have. While the standard plugins file is quite comprehensive, there are still some optional "codecs" that can be installed to add even greater functionality to IrfanView.

IrfanView can be freely installed on Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000, XP, and Vista. As a matter of personal practice, I install IrfanView on every computer that I have, both at home and at work. I strongly recommend IrfanView to all Windows users, as it is fast, free, and capable of doing the vast majority of image editing tasks. It is also a very capable media player that is fast and efficient, loading faster than most of its competitors, including Window's own Media Player. While there are some advanced features available with its commercial counterparts, I would doubt that most users would use those commercial features, and that IrfanView is more than adequate for almost all image editing and media playing needs.

In upcoming columns, I will continue with my personal recommendations for free software that can hold its own against expensive commercial products. In these tough economic times, we must stretch our finite supply of scarce dollars; one way of accomplishing this task is to use some of the free software that developers have created for us, and use our dollars for higher priority needs.

WEBSITES

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

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<table>
<tr><td></td><td>**My Favorite FREE PC Utilities - Part 2 By Ira Wilsker**</td></tr>
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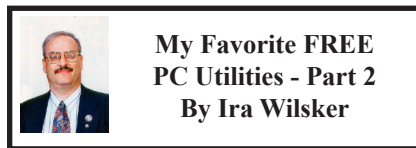
In my continuing efforts to help save my readers' money during these trying economic times, this series on my favorite free PC utilities continues with some more quality software available for free.

I have worked with a lot of people, including some of my students, radio show listeners, and others, who want a quality antivirus and anti-spyware protection utility product that is freeware. While there are several utilities that comply with this requirement, the one that is the most popular by far is the free version of Grisoft's AVG Anti Virus Free Edition, Version 8 <http://free.avg.com>. With the consent of the users, I have personally installed AVG Free Edition on countless computers, both desktop and notebook models, and have had only strong indications

of satisfaction with AVG, with no complaints. Internationally, the free version of AVG has earned a very large and loyal following, with over 70 million copies of the free version downloaded.

Despite its total lack of cost, AVG Anti Virus Free Edition is no weakling in providing virus protection, having earned praise from many of the services that test and rate the protection level of antivirus products. In addition to providing protection from the computer virus threats that plague us, the latest versions (version 8) of AVG also provide comprehensive protection from spyware threats as well. The free edition is only licensed for private, non-commercial (home) use on a single computer, and lacks some of the support and other features of its commercial iteration. The new version 8 will only run on computers with Windows 2000, XP, and Vista, and is compatible with the 64-bit versions of Windows. The older versions of AVG, which would run on older operating systems, are no longer supported. For those home users who want a proven quality antivirus and anti-spyware product, the free version of AVG 8 would be a wise choice.

With the myriad variety of contemporary cyber security threats that we all face, having a decent quality antivirus and anti-spyware product by itself (such as AVG) is not adequate protection from those threats. In addition to a utility such as AVG, we also must have a firewall installed to protect us from intrusion while we are online, and to protect us from unauthorized software or malware which wants to connect to the Internet. While there are several very good free firewalls available, one that has frequently been

at the top of the published quality ratings is Comodo Firewall Pro version 3, a freeware product available for download from <http://www.personalfirewall.comodo.com>. Even though this is a free product, it is fully featured and not a stripped down version like some of its freeware competitors. Comodo Firewall Pro 3 offers comprehensive protection from hackers and crackers, as well as others who would want to break into your system. It offers protection from spyware, Trojans, and some forms of identity theft. This new version 3 includes a "Host Intrusion Prevention System" that prevents many types of malware from being installed on the computer. In the early stages of its install, Comodo Firewall Pro 3 will thoroughly scan the computer for viruses, spyware, and Trojans that may already infest the machine, and remove the malware from the system. Comodo pledges that this is a free download, and that there will be no license fees or other charges ever for the use of the product.

Comodo Firewall Pro 3 is an intelligent program, in that it learns about the programs that are frequently used, and identifies applications and their respective risk profiles of unfamiliar programs, protecting the user from unauthorized Internet access. This firewall will also detect and protect from the threats from key loggers (identity theft programs that steal log in information and passwords), and other forms of malware. This firewall also protects the system from other viruses, Trojans, and spyware by preventing their installation on the system. Since many forms of malware attempt to modify critical system files such that they can wreak their havoc, Firewall Pro 3 prevents unauthorized modifications of

system files and the registry. If a potential threat is detected, the user is notified via a small pop-up window. This pop-up includes a plain English "Security Considerations" which provides advice on whether or not the user should block or allow the questionable process to continue or be blocked. Many malware applications attempt to deactivate security applications so they can accomplish their nefarious tasks without hindrance; Comodo Firewall Pro 3 protects itself and its registry entries from change by third party applications, assuring that the firewall will protect the system, despite a sophisticated malware attack.

Since the threat environment is dynamic and ever changing, Comodo Firewall Pro 3 automatically updates itself every time the computer is booted. Subsequent updates can be scheduled for automatic and transparent downloading and installation, or updates can be manually downloaded and installed. Since many of the contemporary threats are rapidly appearing "zero-day" threats, that spread rapidly after their introduction in cyberspace, and before defensive measures can be implemented, there is a chance that an unknown threat may present itself. If Firewall Pro 3 detects an unknown threat, it will (with your permission) send that unknown threat to Comodo for analysis, and if the threat is verified, Comodo will add it to the database of over a million known applications, and that new threat will be in all users' next update.

Even though this firewall is a free product, it is not without support. Support is provided via interactive online forums, or by e-mail . A comprehensive users' manual is available as a PDF file, an online knowledge base is available,

and the integral help function provides adequate assistance when needed.

The quality of Comodo Firewall Pro 3 has been acknowledged by the media as an excellent product, earning the coveted CNET 5 Star Editors' Rating, and PC Magazine gave it 4 ½ stars, and its Editors' Choice award. CNET described Comodo Firewall Pro 3 as "The program provides a smorgasbord of information and options for advanced users, but it's simple enough for beginners, and runs smoothly and silently in the background. The most obvious new features include support for Windows Vista" PC Magazine said, "The program aces all basic personal firewall tasks…Best of all, it's totally free for personal or professional use." The best endorsement that I can give Comodo Firewall Pro 3 is that I personally use it on my notebook computer.

If you need a free standing firewall, you can not do much better than Comodo Fire Pro 3 at any price.

WEBSITES:
<http://free.avg.com>.
<http://www.personalfirewall.comodo.com>.

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Computer History

1988: Microsoft brings out Windows NT.

With all of the contemporary concerns over high prices, and our ever-tightening budgets, it may be the ideal time to consider free software for desktop publishing, editing photos, and editing digital videos. Some of the free software is "open source" meaning that the original programming code is available to freely tweak, or for independent developers to create add-ons or updates. Some are "lite" versions published by well known companies with fewer features than the commercial version, and other versions are advertiser supported with small, typically unobtrusive, ads which support the development and distribution of the product. It is important to note that many of the free titles are as feature rich as their often expensive commercial competitors, and lack little in substance.

One of my personal favorite free programs is the open source desktop publishing program "Scribus," available from www.scribus.net. This program is a direct competitor to Microsoft's popular Publisher. Available for a variety of operating systems, including Linux, Unix, MacOS X, and OS/2 , as well as Windows, Scribus has earned a loyal following of professionals, as well as numerous awards and recognitions from computer magazines and other media. For those who need a "printer ready" output to go to a professional printer, or those who need to print on their own printer, this program has the power and capacity to do both. Professionals will appreciate the commercial publishing features of Scribus which support

CMYK color, color separation, and ICC color management. For e-mailing or other digital distribution, this program also can be printed directly to PDF format. Typical home and small business users will find this program powerful but easy to use, with an intuitive and user friendly interface that is easy to follow. This program gives the user the ability to create professional quality publications, without incurring any software expense. This program would be ideal for the creation of newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, menus, or any other desktop publishing output. Whether for home, church, school, or business use, Scribus would be a good choice for virtually any desktop publishing need.

A fairly new trend becoming more common as a method of enabling the user to perform software tasks is referred to as "web enabled," where the software is not installed on the user's computer, but instead accessed directly online via a browser. As many of us are now taking countless digital photographs, we may have a need to edit them, create special effects, and upload them to any of many online services. One of the most interesting free online photo editing resources is "flauntR," available online at <http://www.flauntr.com> (free registration required). It is notable that there is no software to install, and that access is totally online. "flauntR" offers a series of modules that enables the user to easily perform a myriad of tasks, each with the ease of a mouse click. The "stylR" feature offers thousands of special effects, photo frames, filters, overlays, and digital scrapbook styles. Using this feature allows the user to make birthday cards, invitations, holiday cards, or other

specialized images from a standard digital photo quickly, easily, and for free. The "editR" function is a full featured image editor, where redeye can be removed, contrast modified, color depth and saturation controlled, and other tweaks can be easily implemented. One cute feature in editR is the ability to convert a digital photograph into what appears to be a charcoal painting, rather than a flat photo, which is an interesting effect.

Sometimes, we would like to add text to a photograph, either as a description, explanation, or salutation; the "textR" function does this with ease and power, and is so easy to use a first time novice can easily master the process. Text can be added to a photo in any color, font, or direction, and can be combined with countless available backgrounds. Once entered, text can be faded, rotated, and resized at will, all online without having any special software installed on the computer. On my cell phone, I have a variety of wallpaper and other images from my digital photos; if my wife or kids call, their respective photos appear on the phone. The "mobileR" function can edit, crop, and resize digital photos in a format ideal for over 250 models of cell phones. Some of us are more artistic than others, and would like to integrate our digital photos into famous paintings; the "picasR" feature can accomplish that with a mouse click. Hundreds of famous paintings are available in "picasR" from many genres and famous artists, and when integrated with a digital photo, produces a memorable and impressive image. Social networking is a popular craze, with hundreds of millions of users on such services as MySpace, Facebook, and others. The "profilR" function can create online profiles for over 30 social networking services, all with a single click of the mouse. Photos are automatically resized to meet the requirements of the social network, making it an easy and fast task to accomplish.

"flauntR" works well on almost any browser, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape, Opera, and Safari, and is not dependent on any particular operating system. "flauntR" also integrates directly and seamlessly with Facebook, Picasa, Flickr, MySpace, Windows Live Spaces, Yahoo 360, Blogger, Digg, and dozens of other social networks and online photo services. Since it is totally online, it can be accessed from home, school, work, hotel, or other location with Internet access. While on a trip or vacation, photos can be edited and uploaded, so others can view them prior to returning home. With the thousands of special effects, users of all ages can have fun and be imaginative, creating art from a simple digital photo.

There are many more excellent and free software utilities available; more will be discussed in future columns. The downside risk of using one of these free utilities is zero, as no expense is incurred, and thus there is no financial risk. Features and functionality compare well to commercial software, sometimes costing hundreds of dollars, but without expense. Free software is often a viable (and sometimes superior) alternative to expensive commercial software, and is quite worthy of a try.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.scribus.net>.
<http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=125235>
—Download SCRIBUS.

<http://www.flauntr.com>—Online photo editing and special effects (Free).

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PC Tune-Up
(Software Review)
By Franz Breidenich

PC Tune-Up™ from Large Software <http://www.largesoftware.com> is used to tune up and improve the operation of the user's computer. The software is available from the developer's web site for $29.95. If you order three or more copies, the price is $16.95 per copy. PC Tune-Up is compatible with Windows 2000, Windows XP and Vista. From the web site, you can download a free trial version of the software. To use this software you go through a four-step procedure to tune up your computer. I tested PC Tune-Up on a HP laptop computer running Windows XP Media Center Edition and a home built tower machine running Vista Home Premium.

There are several advanced configuration options that you can set up. The first option sets the percentage of the disk space to be used for restore points; the default is 12 percent. The next option sets the number of days between Windows' automatically created system restore points; the default is 1 day. The third option is the number of days the restore points are stored; the default for this option is 90 days. The last advanced option is to set the computer to run the Magic Button automatically. The choices are to run daily, weekly or monthly at start-up. I'll explain more about the Magic Button later.

The first step is to backup the registry. The program will ask you where you want to put this backup and what to name the backup. The default location is the C:\MyBackup. The software proceeds to perform the backup.

The second step is to scan the computer for errors. When you select scan it comes back with two choices: Smart Scan, the recommend selection, and Quick Scan. When I performed the Smart Scan for the first time on my laptop computer it reported 186 problems. It listed these problems in 12 different Registry categories plus a Windows/MS-DOS Program Shortcut category.

The third step is the repair of these problems. Here again you have a selection to make. The choices are repair all categories, repair all problems (in the selected category) or select the items to repair. After I selected repair all categories, the software proceeded to fix all the problems in less than five minutes.

The last step is to defrag the registry. This step defrags the registry of the computer and then asks you if you want to restart the computer in order to activate the defragmented registry. This restart eliminates the old data, broken files and other fragmented bits of information.

After defragging the computer, the program gives you the option to optimize your computer. This function lists 17 different areas of your computer that it optimizes, including one that only

helps Athlon computers. There is also a Protect option that protects you from malicious ActiveX Internet Explorer add-ons. It listed 1427 known bad ActiveX programs.

Finally, the last selection on the menu is the Magic Button. If you have configured the software to run the Magic Button, PC Tune-Up daily on start up, the software will run after the machine is booted up. By making this selection the software runs all four steps of the program in order. The software in this case does not give you a report on what items it repaired.

The software developer offers support at their web site by e-mail. By clicking on the support button at the top of the web pages, you bring down an e-mail form that asks your name, e-mail address, operating system and the message to the support people. They state they will answer you shortly. Also on this page they list some PC Tips and Tricks regarding a Slow Computer and a PC Maintenance Guide.

PC Tune-Up worked as described above on my HP laptop computer and by using this software and fixing the problems found by PC Tune-Up on my Windows XP computer, I believe that I have sped up the computer somewhat.

The tower computer running Vista Home Premium was a different story. PC Tune-Up was problematic on his machine. From an administrator account, the program generated errors and could not seem to fix anything if run normally. When both installed and run using "Run as administrator" PC Tune-Up would sometimes complete and seemed to fix several problems but the application crashed frequently. While it is possible that the program would run properly on another machine, at this time I cannot recommend it for a machine running Microsoft Vista.

Your Next Computer Will Be Green
By Marjie Tucker

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

With Europe leading the way, the computer industry is decidedly becoming "green." The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) directives went into effect earlier this year. These two directives state that certain electrical and electronic equipment must cut down on hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. They also give customers the right to return their equipment free of charge. Companies have several years to fully implement these directives, but the leaders have already started to make changes.

Dell, for example, is advertising Energy Smart workstations and notebooks that can reduce power consumption by as much as 78%. The Energy Smart configuration uses a default power setting that is designed to reduce consumption and energy costs right out of the box. In addition, the power supply, fan, and motherboard use significantly less energy to maintain cool internal temperatures.

HP is using 80 Plus power supplies to lower energy bills and AMD technology that reduces heat output and PC power consumption. In addition, they have already introduced an HP recycling program where you can trade-in or donate the products.

Government Initiatives: Many U.S. government agencies have implemented standards and regulations to encourage green computing. The Environmental Protection Agency launched an Energy Star program in 1992 and strengthened its requirements in 2006. In 2003 the California State Senate enacted the Electronic Waste Recycling Act and in 2007 President Bush issued Executive Order 13423 requiring all federal agencies to use the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool when purchasing computer systems. In addition, a global consortium called The Green Grid was founded in 2007 by AMD, APC, Dell, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Rackable Systems, SprayCool, Sun and VMware.

Another initiative formed by a group of Global-minded IT executives, the Green Computing Impact Organization (GCIO), was created to be an active participant in transforming the IT community from an environmental liability to an Earth conscious example of responsibility. GCIO is a nonprofit organization that is based on environmental audit programs for consumers and small business homes with respect to general energy-efficiency programs (including lighting, heating, insulation, etc.). GCIO's mission is to educate and assist enterprise technology users in the design of environmentally aware and responsible information system operations. They help consumers become more environmentally responsible by reducing energy consumption and electronic waste in an effort to protect the Earth.

GCIO is sponsoring educational programs across the country and participating in a Green Computing Summit that will be held in Washington, DC on May 20th. The summit will address how public sector IT managers, procurement officials, and program managers public sector professionals can transform their IT and data center operations into more environmentally conscious yet efficient solutions. This conference will attract senior government IT professionals and their industry partners tasked with helping agencies become greener in the coming years. Attendees will represent federal, state and local governments, public policy organizations and suppliers to government. You can read more about this event at <http://www.e-gov.com/EventOverview.aspx?Event=SGCS08>.

Features of Green Computing

Power management is the most popular method. The operating system of the computer can be set to directly control the power saving aspects of the hardware. It can automatically turn off the monitor or hard drive after a period of inactivity. Or, the entire system may hibernate, turning off most of the components such as even allow the user to manually adjust the voltages supplied to the CPU to reduce the electricity consumption and the amount of heat that is produced. As of July of 2007, all new Energy Star certified desktops must have a power supply that is at least 80% efficient.

Other features include using motherboard video output instead of a video card, hard disks that consume less power, flash based solid state drives that require fewer write cycles, and lower energy monitors. And, manufacturers of networking equipment are developing switches and routers that reduce energy costs.

Recycling Materials

Obsolete computers can be reused for charities, non-profit organizations, and developing countries. Parts from really old systems can be recycled through some recycling centers. Some recycling charges can be passed back to the manufacturers. Recycling this equipment keeps the lead, mercury, and chromium out of our landfills. In addition, computer supplies such as cartridges, paper, and batteries can be easily recycled.

How Can We Work Greener?

Visit the website for Climate Savers Smart Computing at <http://www.climatesaverscomputing.org> to view a three step program to go green. Here are the basic steps that they suggest:

Step One—Turn on Power Management. Since the average desktop PC wastes nearly 50% of the energy it consumes as heat, it makes sense to use the power management features that are built into Windows XP and Vista. The benefits? You will reduce your electricity bills and your energy footprint will be lowered as you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Savers organization predicts that the power management features on your computer can save nearly half a ton of CO2 and more than $60 a year in energy costs.

Step Two—Buy an energy efficient computer. Energy Star, the program designed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, specifies the standards that equipment and appliances must meet to wear the Energy Star badge. You can visit their website at <http://www.energystar.org> for specifics. Basically an Energy Star compliant PC uses 15 to 25 percent less energy. This program is expected to save U.S. consumers and businesses more than $1.8 billion in energy costs over the next five years and prevent greenhouse gas emission equal to 2.7 million vehicles.

Step Three—Unplug from phantom power. As long as your computer is plugged in it still uses electricity, even while it is turned off or in standby mode. A computer that is turned off, but still plugged in, can use up to 10 watts. The Climate Savers estimate that you can reduce your electricity bills by as much as 10% by unplugging your appliances and electronics when they're not being used.

Marjie Tucker is Editor at Mountain Computer User Group, GA. <http://www.mcug.org>. E-mail: <mcug(at)dnet.net>.

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"Lively" by Google: Create avatars. Chat with others in rooms you design. Stream content. <http://www.lively.com>.

Meeting Pictures

(Above) G. Wm. Buchanan talks about Adobe Photoshop Elements 6.0 at the July meeting. (Below) Members at the refreshment break.

Meeting Pictures

(Above): Chester Blechinger and Jerry Comptois discuss the issues. (Below): Tom Callow talks about 64-bit Windows at the SIG-Intermediate meeting.

BOARD MEETING
7/13/2008
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. The meeting was called to order at 12:13 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS
Bette Gay reported that the amount in the treasury equaled $9,014.00 with $4,352.71 in the bank account and $4,661.29 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 74.

It is time for Tom Callow and Jehana Jalil to renew their memberships.

NEW BUSINESS
Mike Bader reported that the Yahoo on-line user group has grown to 48 members. Activity continues to grow.

Bob Clyne reported that the audit has been completed with no issues. He submitted the report to the Secretary.

Bob Clyne reported that Bill Landrum posted the newsletters through February 2008 on the SEMCO web site. Kudos to Bill Landrum!

A discussion took place defining the SEMCO e-mail updates. It was decided that they should be sent once a month with a brief description of the previous month's meeting, an announcement about next month's meeting, and any useful IT information. Richard Jackson will write the update and e-mail it to the board members for feedback. Then Mike Bader will send it to SEMCO members who have subscribed.

Carol Sanzi moved to adjourn. Chuck Moery seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:43 p.m.
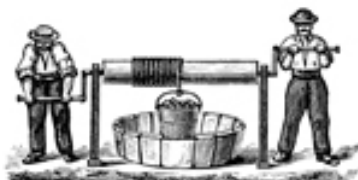
Want to help out? Talk to one of the officers. Opportunities in refreshment management, security operations, publicity, etc.

Have an idea for a topic presentation? Discuss it with our Vice President, Richard Jackson.

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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

August 10: 1:45 p.m. Everything You Wanted to Know About Batteries But Were Afraid to Ask: Barry Murphy, owner of the BatteriesPlus franchise on Woodward in Birmingham speaking on "Everything you Wanted to Know About Batteries but Were Afraid to Ask." This topic will include the history of batteries, how to make them last longer, the proper recycling of batteries, information on computer batteries, and a Q&A.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

August 10: 3:45 p.m. Securing Your Computer With Secunia Online Software Inspector or Secunia PSI (Personal System Inspector): Tom Callow , as guest speaker, will demonstrate how to use Secunia's free system scanners to detect and fix security vulnerabilities in the software installed on your computer.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

August 10: 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

No Sept. meeting because of Labor Day.

Sept. 2008 DATA BUS 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 <u>address on Page 2</u>; e-mail address: <<u>machw@att.net</u>>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact Editor (<u>address Page 2</u>)**.**

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Warner Mach
machw@att.net
(to post monthly computer group info)

CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS

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

DCOM Computer Club
August 14, 6:30–8:30 p.m., Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602. Topic: TBA.

HUG (Holly User Group)
August 9, 9:00 a.m.,(2ⁿᵈ Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup- Detroit
August 24, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 248-569-4933. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: "Lifelock: Security and Identity Theft Protection by Tami Nealy of LifeLock." (22nd Anniversary).

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
August 16, 11:00 a.m., (3ʳᵈ Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. <http://www.mactechnics.org>). JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: "Now You're Cooking; recipe software & websites. Peanut Butter Wiki 2.0, health exercise & nutrition software."

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
August 9, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2ⁿᵈ 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)
August 12, 6:00 p.m., (2ⁿᵈ Tuesday): MUG meetings are at The Farmington Community Library–Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farminton Hills, MI. 48334. <http://www.mug.org>.Topic: TBA.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group
August 14, 7:30 p.m., (2ⁿᵈ 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.
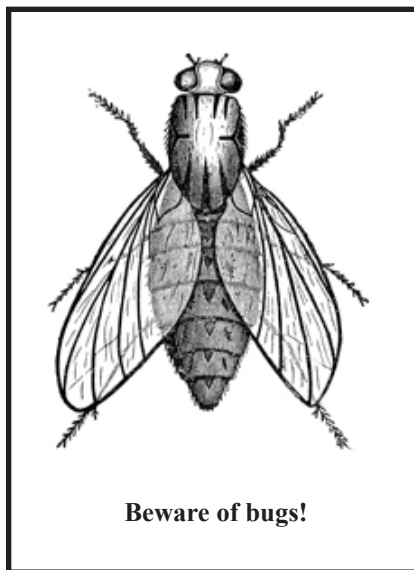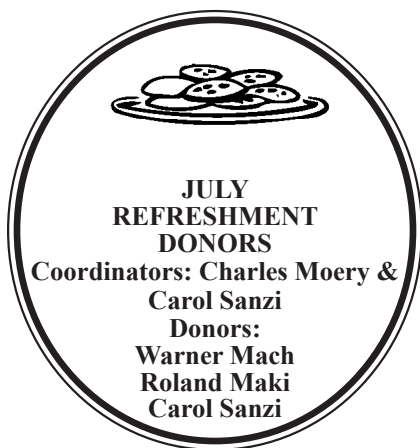
Royal Oak Computer Club
Every Wed., 12:30 to 2:30 PM at Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marais Ave., Royal Oak, 48073. Near Crooks & 13 Mile. Guest speakers & regular monthly speakers. <http://www.geocities.com/royaloakcomputerclub/ourpage.html>

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)
(No meeting), 7:30 p.m.(1ˢᵗ Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. No meetings in July & August.

Wayne State University Mac User Group
August 9, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2ⁿᵈ Saturday); at 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

**JULY
REFRESHMENT
DONORS**
**Coordinators: Charles Moery &
Carol Sanzi
Donors:
Warner Mach
Roland Maki
Carol Sanzi**

Beware of bugs!

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

SEMCO CALENDAR

ArvinMeritor Building
2135 West Maple Road
Troy, Michigan

August 10–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO <u>General</u> Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

<u>S</u>pecial <u>I</u>nterest <u>G</u>roups (SIGs)

<u>SIG-IBM</u> 1:45 p.m. **Program: Everything You Wanted to Know About Batteries But Were Afraid to Ask:** Barry Murphy, owner of the BatteriesPlus franchise on Woodward in Birmingham speaking on "Everything you Wanted to Know About Batteries but Were Afraid to Ask." This topic will include the history of batteries, how to make them last longer, the proper recycling of batteries, information on computer batteries, and a Q&A.

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

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

<u>SIG-IBM Intermediate</u> 3:45 p.m. **Securing Your Computer With Secunia Online Software Inspector or Secunia PSI (Personal System Inspector):** Tom Callow , as guest speaker, will demonstrate how to use Secunia's free system scanners to detect and fix security vulnerabilities in the software installed on your computer.

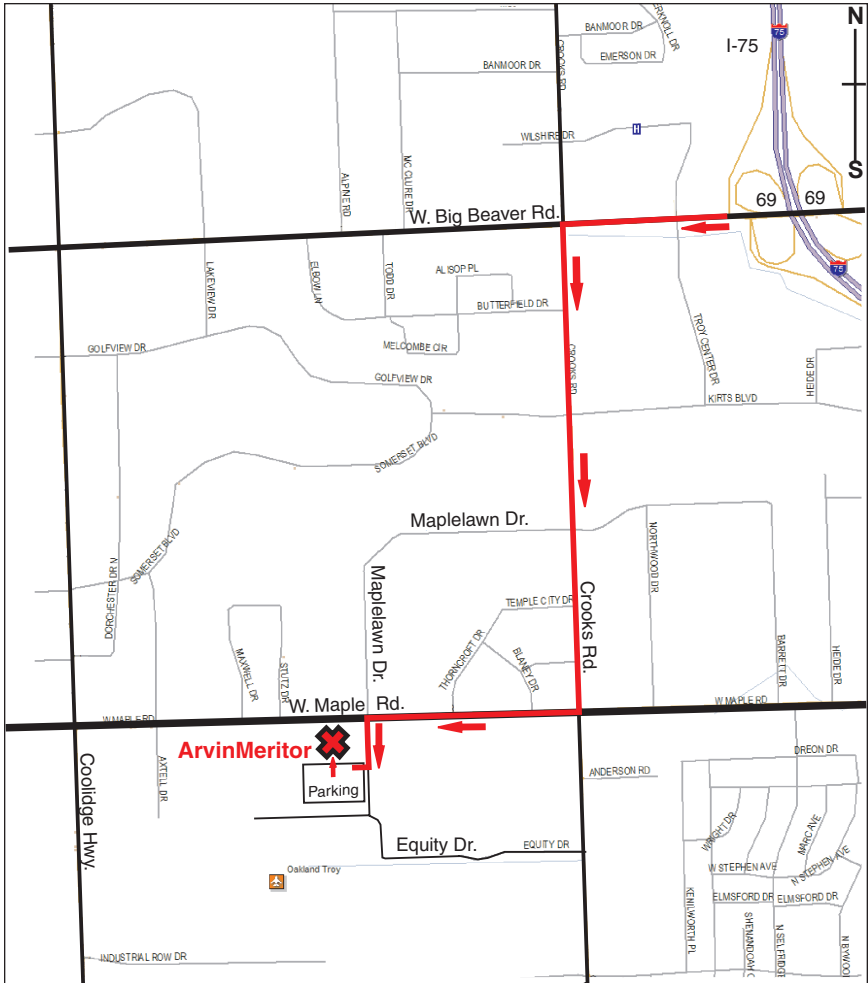<u>SIG-ADVANCED,</u> No September meeting because of Labor Day.

<u>September 14–SEMCO Sunday</u>

http://www.semco.org

PUBLIC INVITED

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

SEMCO Meetings at **ArvinMeritor**
2135 West Maple Road, Troy, MI 48084

DIRECTIONS

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

SEMCO thanks the ArvinMeritor Corporation for their hospitality in providing their facility for our meetings.

apcug
Member of

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
August 10
September 14

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