## IN THIS ISSUE

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

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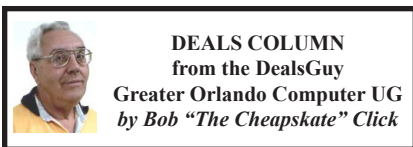
We worked the Cisco show <http://www.cisco-live.com/> and they had over 700 computers setup. Classrooms were everywhere and, in spite of tight security, it was said that 26 laptops disappeared one night. Security certainly got tighter after that. There were attendees from many countries.

Last month I mentioned the Web site "Second Life" and its great popularity. I'm told that other companies have countered with similar products. Here is a quote from Mike Ungerman who helped Hewie Poplock with the presentation: "Following the review of virtual 'universes' like Second Life, I came across several other alternatives that offer much the same capabilities. Google has started Lively <http://www.lively.com/popular>, a 3-D, avatar based, chatting world. It's still pretty rough, but is billed to eventually offer much the same capability as Second Life.

"For those with gaming consoles, either the X-Box 360 or PS3, 3-D avatar based interaction is being offered in the next several months. X-Box Live is Microsoft's system <http://tinyurl.com/5awgjx> and Playstation Home is Sony's offering <http://tinyurl.com/6xckoc>"

**How's Your Registry?**

WiseCleaner has released Wise Registry Cleaner v. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1, a pair of affordable Windows applications that stabilize your computer, and make it run more quickly. Wise Registry Cleaner speeds up the user's computer by cleaning the Windows Registry. The Registry is at the heart of every Windows computer. Each time users install new software, information is added to the Registry. Few uninstall programs remove this information properly or completely. Therefore, over time, as users install and uninstall software, the Registry accumulates junk lines and pointers, and the computer's performance suffers.

Wise Registry Cleaner identifies and safely removes the useless information that has accumulated. In addition to scanning and cleaning the Windows Registry, the program optimizes the PC. If the user accidentally makes a mistake during a tune-up, they can undo all changes with a single click. The latest version of Wise Registry Cleaner includes a useful feature: "System Optimization Tool." Using this tool, users can easily tune up their PC in minutes without being a PC expert! [DealsGuy note: Optimize Your PC appears to only be in the Pro version.]

Wise Disk Cleaner is an intuitive, fast, and easy-to-use application that frees up disk space by deleting files no longer used by any software. In addition to the temporary files, log files, and backup files that accumulate over time, the program can identify more than 50 additional types of unnecessary files that users can safely remove. Instead of sending deleted files to the recycle bin, the program can compress these files and save them to a special directory, allowing users to restore files in the future if they find that they really need them. The latest version of Wise Disk Cleaner contains additional advanced customization options that let users fine-tune cleanup operations. [DealsGuy Note: Move To Location and Advanced

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Options appear to only be in the Pro version.]

Both applications are designed to be used in tandem, allowing users to streamline their Windows Registry and optimize their hard drive. Whether you are a business user who values a stable and brisk computer, a parent who needs to clean up after the software that their children install and uninstall on the family computer, or a computer consultant who needs applications that will keep their customers' PCs running optimally, Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner have the tools that you need.

Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner also offer support for more than twenty languages. It's easy to add additional language support into Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. The User Interface messages are loaded from resource files for all supported languages. This means that you can add a resource file that contains messages in your own language.

Please note that there are FREE versions of both Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. You can choose to pay for the PRO version, or only use the free version if preferred. Wise Registry Cleaner V. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1 run under Windows 98/Me/NT/2000/XP/XP-x64/2003/Vista/Vista-x64/2008 Server, and cost $19.95 (US) each. As a bundle, users can buy both programs for $32.95. Everybody can visit <http://www.wisecleaner.com/> to purchase the software securely online, or to download free trial versions. Users can also download free versions of each program without the advanced options and system optimization tool.

**If You Don't Understand, Try This**

LingvoSoft <http://www.lingvosoft.com> announced the release of an all-new language learning system for Pocket PC that makes speaking any language simple, fast and enjoyable. Putting everything you need in the palm of your hand, LingvoSoft Language Teacher 2008 makes communicating in a new language easier than ever before. Providing every beginner with the tools necessary to start speaking another language immediately, your success is virtually guaranteed.

With intuitive and efficiently arranged sections that teach the alphabet, words, phrases, and dialogs you will soon have the skills you need to start speaking accurately and comprehensibly. With the advanced voice output and speech recognition built-into the Language Teacher you will always get the pronunciation right the first time, something new learners absolutely depend on. Loads of practice tests and evaluations provide the help new students need to start mastering any language immediately. The price is $149.95, but a 25% discount is available on any LingvoSoft software title. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the 'Add Gift' field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button <http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Language-Teacher/>.

**This Should Help You Copy**

[DealsGuy Note: Be sure to thoroughly read the FAQs on their Web site so you more fully understand the capability of the product.]

DVD neXt COPY released version V2.9.9.1 of DVD neXt COPY, a new and improved version that has the best quality of any DVD Copy software

available. DVD neXt COPY triggers the quality king and jumps over the magical quality hurdle of the legendary DVDShrink. Until now the "old" DVDShrink possessed the best quality of any DVD copy program available. It was impossible for any competitors to reach this high level of quality and speed. As of now, DVD neXt COPY has broken through this barrier, and provides better quality and faster burns than DVDShrink (High Quality Mode).

DVD neXt COPY now provides the highest quality of any DVD copy software available. Our extensive quality check was preformed on the majority of the latest DVD movies with excellent results. We have compiled test report on two special movies that are often used as quality reference movies, because they are very complicated to recompress. You can see our results in this test report: <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/quality_messurement.pdf>.

During this special promotional period, everyone can receive 20% off DVD next COPY Xpress, Standard and Pro. Just enter the word "SAVE20" in the coupon field during purchase, to receive your 20% discount. Prices are as follows: XPress $49.99, Standard $69.99, Pro $89.99. The license is good for two computers but does require activation. Read more information about the new DVD neXt COPY at <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com> Watch the online DVD neXt COPY flash tutorials at <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/tutorials.aspx>.

Release Date 6/24/08
V2.9.9.1
Improved Quality Engine
Improved Software Compatibility Mode

Added Pre-scan Preview Function
Updated Resources to V2.9.9.1
Product page link: <http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/overview.aspx>

**What's That Key?**
Everybody knows Windows has a product key used to install it. If you needed it for some reason, do you remember where you put it? It also ends up embedded in your registry so maybe you could edit your registry if necessary to retrieve it, but that's living dangerously. The Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder V2.0.1 is a freeware utility that will go in and get it for you. It has options to copy the key to your clipboard, save it to a text file or print it for your records. It works on a wide family of Windows operating systems.

It also has support for multiple installations of Office, and the ability to change the Windows XP, 98 and ME installation key. It's at <http://magicaljellybean.com/keyfinder/>. Also offered is a neat popup dictionary that is freeware. I read about these long ago in Tim Hoke's freeware column in PC Alamode, newsletter for Alamo PC Organization <http://www.alamopc.org/index.shtml>.

*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 3
By Ira Wilsker**

In my continuing efforts to try and assist my readers in these trying economic times, I am continuing to provide you with information on quality software available at no cost. While many of us routinely use our computers for a variety of tasks, there is often no need to purchase expensive commercial software when totally viable and free alternatives are available. Some of the free software is competitive in key features to its expensive competitors, and can often perform similar tasks. In many circumstances, free software alternatives should be considered, freeing up our fiscal resources for other more important daily needs.

With normal use, the performance of our computers tends to degrade as our hard drives become cluttered, our registry grows with often obsolete and erroneous entries that can adversely impact PC performance, and booting and shutting down our computers becomes a time consuming activity. On my weekly radio show I am frequently asked by callers about how to resolve the aforementioned predicaments; one freeware utility that I often recommend is IObit's Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition, available for download from <http://www.iobit.com>. For those who desire more features and enhancements, IObit offers a commercial Professional Edition.

Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition is a comprehensive free utility that can be used to help improve the performance of a sluggish computer by performing a variety of tasks. For those who desire simplicity without technical drudgery, this software offers the user the option to scan and repair his computer with two mouse clicks from the opened program. The first click should be on the "SCAN" selection which will scan the system for errors and problems, and present a detailed report of problems found on the screen. After reviewing what the program found, a "REPAIR" button will be a logical next step. The second mouse click will safely repair critical operating system and software components, without any additional participation from the user, optimizing much of the system. Many users actually perform this two-click procedure on a daily basis to help ensure optimal performance. According to IObit, this automated periodic scan and repair will help end "slow downs," freezes and crashes, and will also help identify many security threats. This Personal Edition also includes a periodically updated database of spyware and adware signatures, and scans the system for spyware, adware, and other malware, and can help remove it, a necessary key to personal cyber security. Personal Edition can also be used to protect the users' privacy by erasing the users' history files and tracks. This software can be used to detect and remove obsolete files, junk files, and corrupted registry entries.

One major cause of deteriorated PC performance, slow boots, slow shutdowns, insufficient virtual memory warnings, and other plagues of good performance is having too many useless or even dangerous programs in the system startup. Many programs set themselves up to run at each boot when originally installed, supposedly as a

convenience to the user. In reality, many of these auto-starting programs can be resource hogs, interfere with each other, and severely degrade performance. Removing unnecessary programs from the startup may significantly improve system performance. While this list of startup programs can be manually modified by using a cryptic but integral Windows utility called "MSConfig," the typical user would not likely know what all of the entries mean. Personal Edition includes a competent startup manager that can either be run as part of the automated scan, or can be run selectively (my personal choice). The Personal Edition startup manager displays a list of those programs that load at boot, and a description of many of them from a database of known startup entries. Known entries are labeled on the right side of the screen as trusted and safe (probably leave them alone), or an indication of their usefulness or dangers. Unchecking the box to the left of each entry, and applying the results will prevent those items from loading at next boot, resulting in improved performance. Dangerous startup entries can be deleted. Clicking on the line of a known item will display a description of the item in the left side of the display. Unknown startup items are displayed, and an option is presented to perform a web search to identify them, allowing the user to decide which item will continue to load at boot. It should be noted that if an item is unchecked by the user (and not deleted), it can always be re-checked at a later time to re-enable it to load at boot.

Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition is a popular and well regarded free software product. It runs on Windows 2000, XP, and Vista, and has logged over ten million downloads in the three years since its introduction. Cnet's <http://Download.com> lists this program as its #1 most popular system utility, based on the number of downloads. Cnet's editors rated this program highly, and said, "Advanced WindowsCare Personal provides a convenient way for non-technical users to perform routine maintenance and apply system optimization tweaks without the need to become a computer geek." Along with this statement, Cnet awarded Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition its highest five-star rating. Cnet is not alone in its kudos for this program; the popular download service Tucows gave it its highest "five cow" rating. Other websites and publications have acknowledged the quality of this software, including "MajorGeeks" Editors' Pick, and many others.

In terms of features, Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition is very competitive in terms of features with its commercial counterparts, surpassing many of them in terms of features, ease of use, and overall performance improvement. Personally, I put Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition on almost every privately owned computer that I have, and have recommended it to many people, including my radio show listeners. It would be a worthy addition to any PC users' collection of software. Users may also find that it may become one of their most useful software utilities, at a price that cannot be beat.

**WEBSITES:**
<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>

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**My Favorite FREE PC Utilities - Part 4 By Ira Wilsker**

In an ongoing effort to help out my loyal readers in these trying economic times, I am continuing to report on excellent quality software that can successfully compete with its commercial counterparts, but is available to the user at no charge. In this column I will discuss a full-featured office suite that has millions of loyal users, but can be freely downloaded and used by anyone. Many of us have been irritated by Microsoft's nearly monopoly pricing of its Office suite, and have vowed to use an alternative suite if one became available. Third party commercial software publishers, such as Corel and its WordPerfect suite, have produced some excellent quality office suites which, despite a typical price advantage, have been unable to significantly crack Microsoft's Office's virtual monopoly of office suites. Perhaps a comprehensive office suite, which can read and write files formatted in Microsoft's Office formats, but available to all totally for free, could provide the user with a powerful and most cost effective (free) alternative to Microsoft's expensive Office suite. This free alternative, currently available for download as version 2.41 of OpenOffice (openoffice.org) would be a very worthy download, and provide any user of office services with a powerful office suite.

OpenOffice is not new, and has been available for a few years. In its lifetime, it has developed a very loyal following of millions of users around the world, including schools and colleges, businesses, non-profits, home users, government agencies, and other consumers of office suites. The current stable download is version 2.41, but for those who would like to try the newest and latest iteration, there is a version 3.0 beta 2 available for download.

OpenOffice is a full featured office suite, which can read and write almost all popular office formats, including Microsoft's. This suite contains a powerful word processor, simply called Writer. A word processor is arguably one of the most frequently used office components, and Writer is feature rich, and uses an interface that would be familiar to Microsoft Word users. In my personal experience with Writer, there was a virtual zero learning curve when I first used Writer, but I was familiar with Word. I have not been able to easily find a feature in recent versions of Word that is lacking in Writer; in fact I have not found a word processing task that cannot be accomplished with Writer. For those who like to tweak their software and add additional features, there are dozens of free "extensions" or free plug-ins for Writer. These extensions include specialized dictionaries, hundreds of business templates (fill in the blank sample documents), and many others, all available for free download. Writer can more than adequately meet almost any conceivable word processing task.

I have used a variety of spreadsheets over time, in the PC realm including Lotus 123, Quattro (my early favorite), and Excel. OpenOffice includes a comprehensive spreadsheet called Calc

that can read and write spreadsheet formats from most competitive products. As with Writer, experienced users of other spreadsheets can open Calc and be immediately productive, without any significant learning curve, as the interface will be familiar. Calc supports graphics, charts, sounds, annotations, and virtually all of the other features of its expensive commercial competitors. Calc, an integral part of the OpenOffice suite, should be strongly considered before paying any license or upgrade fees for another competitive product. Since OpenOffice is free for anyone to download and use, it would be worthy of a try.

I do a lot of presentations using Microsoft's PowerPoint, primarily because that is what is already installed on computers that I may be provided. I am not too proud to let you in on a sneaky little secret; I have composed some of my presentations on OpenOffice's Impress, rather than Microsoft's PowerPoint … and no one noticed the difference! Impress is the free competitor to PowerPoint, and as with other OpenOffice components, has a familiarity to it that users of PowerPoint will immediately recognize. Another sneaky secret is that I have on a few occasions used Impress to resolve some slide, sound, and display problems that were frustrating PowerPoint users. For users who desire to create very professional appearing presentations, but not incur the costs of a commercial product such as PowerPoint, Impress would be an outstanding choice.

An office suite typically contains more than a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation program, and OpenOffice is no different. It also includes a powerful and compatible database program (Base), a drawing program (Draw), a charting program (Chart), and an equation editor (Math). Compared to its pricey competitors, there is not much lacking in the free OpenOffice. For those who want extra power and features in any of the components, OpenOffice has hundreds of extensions and other program add-ons that can be freely downloaded and installed.

There are also several administrative advantages to using OpenOffice, and these include the utter lack of administering and renewing licenses in compliance with often complicated and expensive software management. OpenOffice is free to copy and distribute, and may be used by anyone at home, work, school, or anywhere else. Teachers can freely distribute copies to their students; employers can freely distribute copies to employees for both home and office use; schools and colleges can freely install OpenOffice in offices and computer labs, and provide copies to anyone who asks. Personally, I have given copies to many of my students without any fear of violating any copyrights.

For those who want a primary office suite without the cost, OpenOffice would be an excellent choice. For those who already have a commercial office suite (or just a single component), but would like to review a free alternative that complies with the latest international standards of compatibility and document formats, OpenOffice would be a wise choice. Visit OpenOffice.org and see for yourself one of the most powerful suites available anywhere for free. WEBSITES:

<http://www.openoffice.org>.

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**My Favorite FREE PC Utilities–Part 5
By Ira Wilsker**

On my weekly radio show I frequently receive calls from listeners who may have been infected by a virus, worm, Trojan, or other form of malware, despite having antivirus software installed. This is actually more prevalent than many users realize, as there are many so called "zero-day" threats circulating for which the antivirus companies have not yet released protective digital signatures to detect and remove the threats. As I have reiterated countless times, it is important to note that there is a lag time, sometimes substantial, between the appearance of a threat, and the distribution by the antivirus companies of protective digital signatures. During this lag time, the computer is vulnerable to new threats. Another parallel issue is that people typically do not update their protective security software as often as they need to, often relying on a default setting that may be too long. I have callers who are furious that they are infected, despite the fact that they have name brand, reputable and often expensive security software that they update on a daily basis; that is inadequate considering the high rate of new security threats that show up on a continuous basis. An analogy would be this morning's newspaper; it may have today's date on the masthead, but it is really yesterday's news. Somewhat similarly, this morning's antivirus updates are for viruses and other threats found last night, leaving us unprotected from today's threats.

It is a good security practice to periodically determine if your antivirus and anti-spyware software has been breached, a risk that may not be apparent. Fortunately for us, there are several free online utilities that will perform a security scan on our computers, utilizing the latest, continuously updated signature files. The granddaddy of the free online scans, and arguably one of the most popular, is Trend Micro's Housecall, online at <[http://housecall.trendmicro.com](http://housecall.trendmicro.com)> (also still available from its classical URL, <[http://housecall.antivirus.com](http://housecall.antivirus.com)>). The process of performing a Housecall free scan is simple. Open the page, and click on the "house" icon. It will first lead to a page offering the option to purchase Trend's Internet Security Suite, but clicking on the "Launch Housecall Free Scan" icon will open the free scanning utility. Housecall will run on almost any reasonably modern computer with Windows 98SE or later (Vista is not listed), and a contemporary browser (Firefox, Mozilla, or Internet Explorer). Housecall will also run on a Mac with OS X 10.4 "Tiger," LINUX, and SOLARIS. Depending on the browser used, Housecall will install either an ActiveX (Internet Explorer), or Java (Mozilla and Firefox) utility that includes the core engine. Once installed, the utility will detect and remove malware, consisting of viruses, worms, Trojans, grayware, and spyware. If spyware or other malware is detected and removed, Housecall will attempt to

repair any damage they caused to the system. Housecall will also scan for vulnerabilities of installed programs and network connections. Depending on the speed of the computer and the size of the hard drive, Housecall may take minutes to hours to run. If Housecall says the system is clean and free of malware, it likely really is.

Microsoft is a "Johnny come lately" to the free online scan business, with an online version of its OneCare product at <http://safety.live.com>. Being ActiveX based, the OneCare online scan requires Internet Explorer with ActiveX enabled. After opening the web page, the user has four icons to select from in the center of the page, Protection, Clean up, Tune up, and Full Service Scan. The "Protection" icon will run Microsoft's free online malware scan, which is now a very capable product. It will scan for viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, and other malware, and will attempt to remove any malware that it finds. In side by side tests, it is comparable in detection and speed to Housecall. The other icons on the page can be used to remove junk files from the hard drive (Clean up), or improve performance through defragging and other services (Tune up). Click on the "Full Service Scan" icon to run all three services sequentially, which is not a bad choice for periodic maintenance.

No security software is perfect and invulnerable, and an additional layer of security is desirable. PC Tools Software has a freeware version of its popular Threatfire software <http://www.threatfire.com>, which runs on top of any antivirus software installed, improving the level of protection without interfering with the original security software. Published reports and tests indicate that Threatfire plugs holes in the name brand security software, greatly enhancing combined security effects through synergy. Threatfire is not a free standing product, but instead intended to run with other security software. In a published report of the efficacy of Threatfire when run with several of the top selling software suites (2007 versions), increased detection and protection of malware from 15% to 235% occurred, compared to the base security software without Threatfire. It should be noted that unlike some of the security software, Threatfire is not a resource hog, and utilizes only minimal system resources when running, and does not significantly degrade system performance.

I have Threatfire installed on all of my computers, regardless of the other security software installed. I notice from a "balloon" that it updates automatically several times a day, but it is not dependent solely on digital signatures, like most of the other security products. Threatfire detects malicious behavior, such that it can protect against known threats (with published digital signatures) and unknown and "zero-day" threats, for which no signatures are currently available. The quality of Threatfire has been recognized by the technical press, with numerous awards and other recognition. PC Magazine has twice acknowledged the excellence of Threatfire by awarding it its "Editors' Choice Award."

By periodically running one of the free online scans to verify that the computer is free of malware that may have slipped through its defenses, and installing an additional layer of defense like Threatfire, the user can do much to improve the security of his computer.

These tasks can be accomplished for free, and they are well worth the price. WEBSITES:

<http://housecall.trendmicro.com>.
<http://safety.live.com>.
<http://www.threatfire.com>.

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**Practical Application of
Free Software
By Ira Wilsker**

For the past several weeks, I have written about some of the best free software available, and how it can save the user significant money if used instead of commercial software. I recently had the opportunity to put some of this free software to use, and successfully improved the performance of an older notebook computer.

I was in Atlanta for the wedding of one of my daughters. She had complained for weeks that her several year old Compaq notebook (laptop) computer was sluggish, and running slow, and that over recent days, prior to the wedding, it was outright crawling in performance. The computer had an antiquated Celeron processor, and 512 megs of memory, and was running XP Home edition. She asked me that if I had time while in Atlanta, could I please look at her computer; with wedding related expenses, and graduate school costs, money was a little tight and a new computer was at present beyond her tightly stretched budget.

A quick inspection of her computer indicated that she had a lot of unnecessary software running, multiple toolbars on her browser windows, a registry that had never been cleaned of obsolete entries, a badly fragmented hard drive, and a host of other problems. To compound her prior problems, a series of house guests from the groom's family, had downloaded several so called "free" games and other items to her computer. Several of those "free games" contained forms and varieties of malware, which were now installed and running on her computer, consuming her scarce and limited resources.

While she had a major Internet security suite installed, which I verified was running and up-to-date, several of the malware items had been installed despite the security software. Reviewing the security log created by the security suite, the security software did indeed catch the bulk of the malware while the "free" games were being installed, but when the user was asked what to do when the malware was detected, the unknown users selected the choice that it was OK to install, thus overriding the protective security barrier. The firewall also detected malware that was "calling home," but the unknown user chose to "allow" that communication, a dangerous and improper choice. To detect and kill almost all of the malware, I decided to perform one of the free online security scans, and ran Trend Micro's excellent Housecall product <http://housecall.antivirus.com>. The Housecall scan detected and removed several Trojans and spyware products, but five pieces of malware could not be removed because they were loaded into memory and currently running; I made note of those five problem items.

Next, I uninstalled almost a dozen games and other "free" games and other recent downloads, some of which would not fully uninstall, an indication that they may be loaded and running or otherwise protected from deletion, a symptom of many types of malware. There was some overlap between the items that could not be removed by Housecall, and those that could not be uninstalled by Add/Remove programs. I next examined her startup files using the latest version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care Personal Edition (the free edition), which I downloaded from <http://www.iobit.com>, and installed. By choice, I only ran the manual startup utility (Tools – Startup), rather than the automated one-click complete cleanup. I was shocked to find over 40 items loaded at boot, a grossly excessive number of useless programs and resource hogs. About one-half of the startup items were recognized by IObit, most of which were labeled as "unnecessary" which I duly unchecked, blocking them from starting at the next boot. I was familiar with some of the remaining entries unrecognized by IObit, and unchecked those I knew to be unnecessary. Remaining entries that I did not recognize were mostly identified by a web search, and almost all were unchecked. There were also a few entries for programs that had been identified by Housecall as malware, and were on my list of programs that would not uninstall. They were unchecked, and the malware entries deleted. I rebooted the computer, which now only loaded about a third of what was previously loaded at boot, and it booted much faster, and there was a lower load on system resources, improving performance.

Now that the suspicious programs were not loaded into memory, the Add/Remove utility could uninstall the unwanted programs. Even though the programs were apparently deleted, there still could be obsolete entries in the registry, which can degrade performance. I downloaded and installed the free version of Wise Registry Cleaner from <http://www.wisecleaner.com>. What is especially nice about Wise Registry Cleaner (free edition) is that it will only delete, by default, those registry entries that can be safely deleted, and a backup file is automatically created in the unlikely event that a restore is necessary. My daughter's Compaq had over 500 obsolete registry entries that could be safely deleted, which I did. One task that I did not perform, which would be a logical next step, would be to defragment the registry, which would result in a small increase in performance.

Being an older computer, it only has a 40 gig hard drive, which has been adequate for her purposes. She does have an external USB 2.0 160 gig hard drive that she uses for backup purposes and additional storage, so the 40 gig drive is not a major inconvenience. In viewing the contents of her hard drive, I noticed that she had a lot of obsolete and otherwise useless files that were consuming valuable real estate on her limited 40 gig drive, and that these files needed to be safely removed. I downloaded and installed one of my favorite programs that used to have a "dirty" name, but is now well known only as CCleaner (I will not say what the first "C" originally stood for). I downloaded the free CCleaner from <http://www.ccleaner.com>, installed it, and ran it. It is a fast program, and

took about two minutes to run; in that two minutes it found thousands of obsolete and useless files, totaling 499 mb, almost a half-gig of wasted space. After running CCleaner, I ran XP's integral defragmentation utility, which reorganized her horribly fragmented hard drive.

My daughter's old Compaq now runs almost as good as new, boots quickly, shuts down quickly, programs load and run faster, and there is a very noticeable improvement in performance. The total cost for the software utilities to perform these tasks was zero. The total time to perform these tasks was about two hours. There was nothing that was highly technical and "geekish" that had to be performed, and almost anyone can perform these same tasks with the same free software. If you have a now sluggish computer, and are willing to invest a little time, try following these steps. There are other things that can be done, such as installing additional memory. The possible improvement in performance may belay the need to run out and buy a new computer for the time being.

**WEBSITES:**
<http://housecall.antivirus.com>.
<http://www.iobit.com>.
<http:// www.wisecleaner.com>.
<http:// www.ccleaner.com>.

*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>.*

See <http://www.photosynth.com> for 3-D walkthroughs.

**Security and Deleting Files–**
**A Common Misconception**
**By Bob Schwartz**

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

You have just deleted a file from your hard drive. It is gone, isn't it? Sorry! It is still there.

You want to clean up your hard drive, so you format it. It is now clean. Nothing is on it anymore, right? Nope! Everything is still there, except for the file directory.

How can this be? Doesn't Delete mean remove? Doesn't Format clean the disk?

Each file system - has a file directory which records the file name and it's location.

To delete a file, the disk system only alters the file's name in the file directory, usually by changing the first letter of the name. Formatting goes one step further, it just empties the file directory. Neither does anything to the files on the disk! They remain.

To clean a drive, either overwrite the whole drive or the unused space. The most common way to clean drives, especially older drives, is to write fixed or random data obliterate the old files.

Fortunately, all ATA drives over 15-20 GB produced since 2001 have an internal drive command that will clean the drive sufficiently that it will meet DOD requirements. At the University of California at San Diego's Center for Magnetic Recording Research (CMRR) you can download their free program for Secure Erase, entitled "HDDerase. exe." Its use meets U.S. Government requirements for disk erasure. Secure

Erase should provide the greatest peace of mind. Internet Commentary suggests it is even better than mechanically shredding the disks.

If you have a good machine with good software that you would like to pass on to some else, and you don't have all the original disks - remove personal information. I suggest this approach:

1.      "Delete" the contents of: all the "My" folders - My Documents, My Pictures, My Music; Recent; Temp or Temporary folders; Recycle Bin; Cookies; Downloads; and the entire folders for Quicken and Tax preparation software.

2.      Clean your Registry of all personal data. For XP, go to Start/Run, type regedit and press Enter. Go to edit and click on find. Enter your last name, click on find next. When the first entry is found, go to edit and select modify. Delete your name (it should be in color). Depressing the space bar may clear it. Go back to edit and click on find next, etc. Keep on until you get a message that you have reached the end. Then repeat the above with your first name, then your street, your phone number, bank name, broker name, and anything else of a personal nature that you used.

3.      Find and download a registry cleaner. Use it to remove unnecessary items from the registry. CCleaner is an example.

4.      Defragment the drive. This condenses the files and moves them toward the beginning of the drive.

5.      Locate and download a wipe application such as bcwipe. Use it to wipe (overwrite) all unused space.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before editing your "registry," back it up first, please.

This should effectively sanitize your disk, leaving it clean, safe and usable.

Loss of personal information and the risk of identity theft is a risk for you. For a business, the loss of personal, financial, or medical data may subject it to risk from recent laws, both federal and state.

I have been repairing or rehabilitating older machines as a hobby to give them a second life. There are many good machines and plenty of worthy recipients. If there is good software worth keeping, remove all personal data. If the software is not worth keeping, then wipe the disk clean to install an operating system and applications.

Removing the hard drive before you dispose of an old machine is not a solution, unless you plan to use it in your new machine, or store it permanently—you still ultimately have to sanitize it.

Programs available, free or fee, include: Secure Erase (mentioned above), Secure Delete, Wipe Drive, Acronis Privacy Expert, East-Tec Eraser, East-Tec Dispose Secure, Eraser, SysInternals SDelete, Darik's Boot and Nuke (dban), OverWrite, Wipe, Kill Disk, BCWipe, and Autoclave. This list is NOT exhaustive. And, you have to determine which is suitable to (1) wipe the entire drive or (2) wipe only the unused space.

Bottom line is, when you give away or dispose of a used computer, either clean the hard drive yourself or give the machine to someone you can trust who will do it for you. The comments and opinions here are wholly mine. I welcome alternative perspectives.
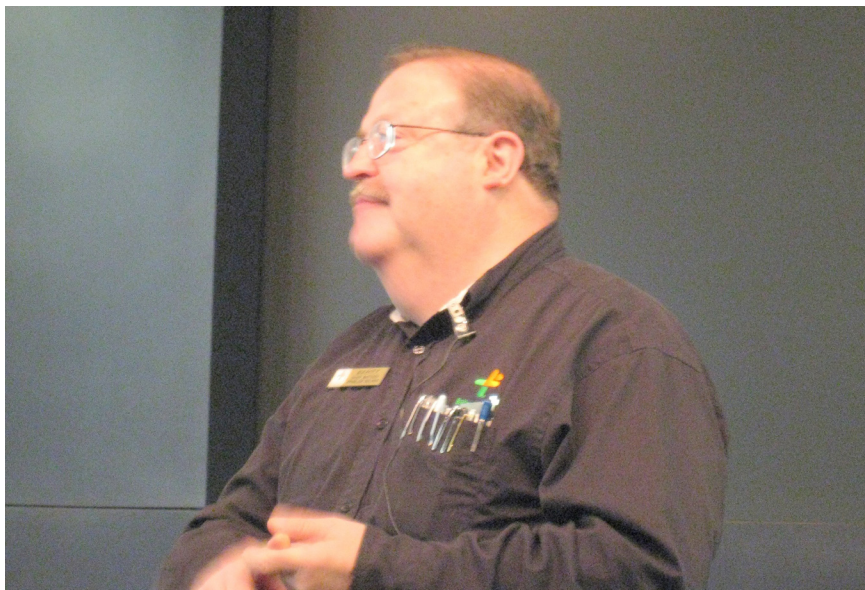
*Bob Schwartz is a Member of HAL-PC, Texas. Web: <www.hal-pc.org>. E-mail: <bobx(at)hal-pc.org>.*

*Mr. Schwartz is a retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active*

(Above) Barry Murphy of BatteriesPlus speaks at the August meeting of SIG-IBM. (Below) Members at the refreshment break.

# *Meeting Pictures*



**(Above): Members at the refreshment break.. (Below): Tom Callow talks about the use of the Secunia software checkers at the SIG-IBM Intermediate meeting..**

**BOARD MEETING
8/10/2008
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 12:07 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**
Bette Gay reported that the amount in the treasury equaled $9,283.39 with $4,585.18 in the checking account and $4,698.21 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 78.

Bob Clyne suggested that the e-mail updates should be sent out as plain text instead of html and maybe the attachment could be eliminated. Richard Jackson and Mike Bader spent 11 hours working on sending the e-mail update through the list server and will work on improving it. There are now 36 persons receiving the updates. If you would like to receive these notices, contact Richard Jackson or Mike Bader.

It is time for Paul Cervero and Adele Sapilewski to renew their memberships.

**NEW BUSINESS**
A discussion took place regarding the possibility of reducing the SEMCO dues. Bob Clyne suggested that the dues remain at the current rate until the budget is due. At that time he will prepare two budgets, one at $25 and one at $30. The board could then analyze the feasibility of such a reduction.

Carol Sanzi moved that SEMCO reimburse board members the $35 registration fee for attending the Midwest User Group Regional Conference in Chicago Heights September 19th to the 21st. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

Carol Sanzi moved to adjourn. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.



**PCMover Quick Review
By Warner Mach**

I used 'PCMover' to move my files from a Thinkpad T42 machine running XP Professional to a Dell Latitude D630 running XP Professional.

The cost of the software plus USB 2.0 cable is $49.45 on Amazon.com. The transfer took about three hours over the USB cable. The license is for a one-time transfer. It is possible to exclude programs that you do not want copied.

The company warns you that the "drivers" may not transfer properly and, indeed, they do not. Anything associated with a driver required a reinstall. This included reinstalling my printer, my Verizon aircard, and the ability to produce PDF files as a printer option (using "PDF Producer Professional").

I use the Invisus security system and had to call them to get things transferred over to the new machine. If you run Microsoft Office, it gets unhappy when it finds itself on a new machine. It wants you to put the Microsoft CD in the drive. InDesign (Adobe) required that I let it contact home base.

# SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

## SIG-IBM
### Tom Callow

**September 14: 1:45 p.m. Computer Crash Reconstruction With 3D Animation:** Presented by Deputy Thomas Poulin, Crash Reconstruction Unit of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Poulin will show how 3D animation software is used to reconstruct accidents.

## SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

**September 14: 3:45 p.m. Distributed Computing Projects:** Lend your computer (a bit at a time) and help change the world: Tom Callow, as guest speaker will discuss distributed computing and how you can join hundreds of thousands of volunteers all over the world, via the Internet, in one of dozens of computing projects, such as searching for extra-terrestrial intelligent life, or finding more effective drugs to fight cancer and the AIDS virus..

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

**September 14: 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

**October 6: 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**.**

**Sept. 2008 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**
**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Sept. 21, 11:59 p.m.**
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <machw@att.net>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
**Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly.** Contact Editor (address Page 2)**.**

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

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

**COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**
Oct. 1, 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>. Topic: "Great Web Sites & Web Services" by Mark Repp.

**DCOM Computer Club**
Sept. 12, 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)**
Sept. 13, 9:00 a.m.,(2nd Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

**MacGroup- Detroit**
(See web site), 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>.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**
Sept. 20, 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: "Home Networking." Also, see web site for information about InDesign User Group.

**MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)**
Sept. 13, 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)**
Sept. 9, 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**
Sept. 11, 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/>.

**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**
Oct. 7, 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>. Topic: "Explore TV & Video Online" by Jan Lauder of Troy Public Library.

**Wayne State University Mac User Group**
Sept. 13, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2nd Saturday); at 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

*in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.*

*This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).*

**AUGUST REFRESHMENT DONORS**
**Coordinator: Gary DeNise**
**Donors:**
**Al Bochenek**
**Bob Clyne**
**Kaye Johnson**
**Warner Mach**
**Roland Maki**
**Carol Sanzi**

**Computer History**

**1994:** Version 1.0 of Linux kernel released.

**Computer History**

**1991:** Microsoft brings out DOS 5.0.

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**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
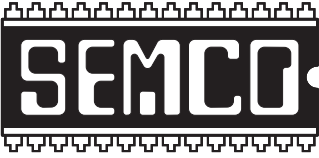
**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

# SEMCO CALENDAR

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

### September 14–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: Computer Crash Reconstruction With 3D Animation:** Presented by Deputy Thomas Poulin, Crash Reconstruction Unit of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Poulin will show how 3D animation software is used to reconstruct accidents.

<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. **Distributed Computing Projects:** Lend your computer (a bit at a time) and help change the world: Tom Callow, as guest speaker will discuss distributed computing and how you can join hundreds of thousands of volunteers all over the world, via the Internet, in one of dozens of computing projects, such as searching for extra-terrestrial intelligent life, or finding more effective drugs to fight cancer and the AIDS virus..

<u>**SIG-ADVANCED,**</u> Oct. 6, 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 248-398-359. TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing..
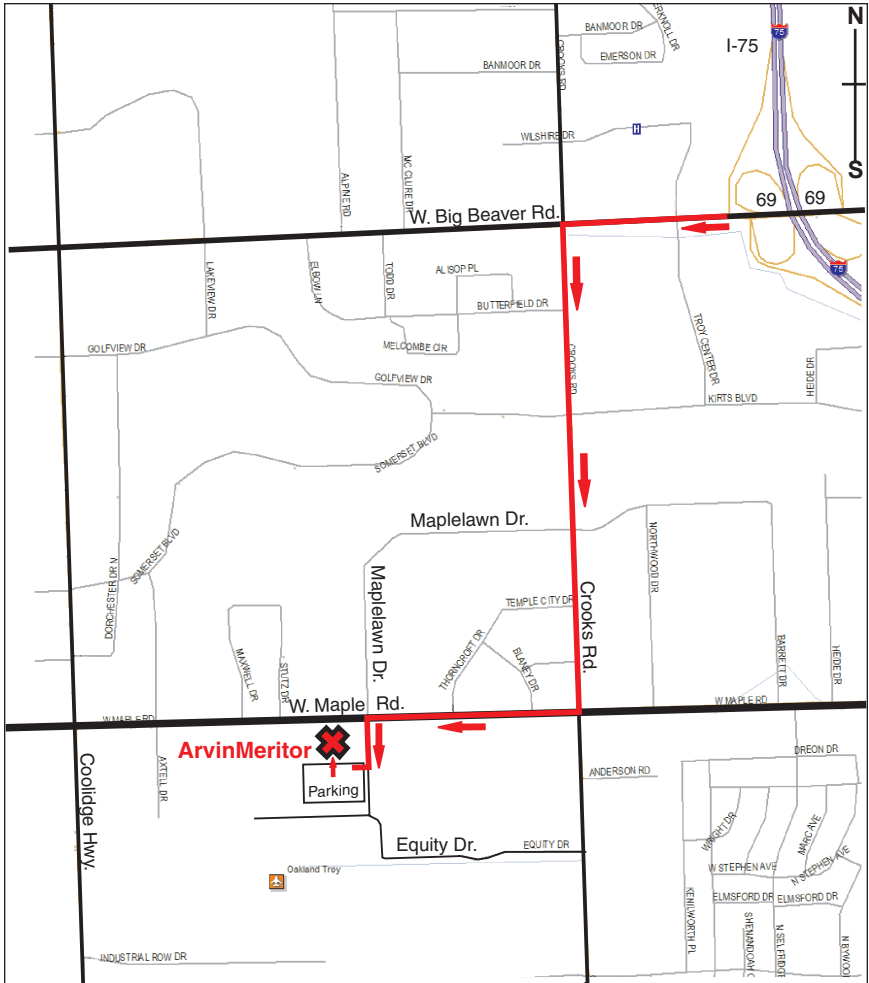
<u>**October 12–SEMCO Sunday**</u>

## 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)**
**September 14**
**October 12**

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