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IN THIS ISSUE

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

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This Will Be Easy, I Thought!

About three months ago, I bought a basic new Toshiba Satellite A-205 laptop with a Celeron processor, one gig of RAM and Vista Home Basic. It was also Wi-Fi ready. I thought I would probably only use it when I go out of town, mostly for e-mail and MS Office 2003. I booted it up to look at Vista and decided to register it with Toshiba, but before I finished the registration, a message told me McAfee had finished installing, which frustrated me since it had not asked my permission. After taking a quick look at Vista, and being hounded by more advertising, I set it in the closet until I had more time to work with it.

About three months later it was time to finish preparing it for a trip out of town, so I started by downloading the free PC Decrapifier <http://www.PCdecrapifier.com> to remove the trial products on the laptop. There were five columns of icons for all kinds of stuff that I would mostly not want. Decrapifier puts itself into a temporary folder and then searches your machine for all the items it has on it. I selected everything I wanted taken off and it proceeded to remove all except the MS Office trial; and when it finished, only two columns of icons remained. I found a bargain to add more memory, giving me noticeably better speed loading, and later upgraded to Vista Home Premium since I was repeatedly told that Vista Home Basic doesn't offer much.

On my trip north, I visited my friend Bob Clyne who I had previously spoken with on the phone and mentioned upgrading the laptop. I had not upgraded Vista yet when I got there and asked him to help install the Vista Home Premium upgrade. What followed sure didn't seem like routine for such an install. On the package, it stated that the upgrade included SP1 for Vista. After starting the upgrade installation, it suddenly stopped with a message stating that before the package could be installed over Vista Home Basic we would have to install Vista SP1. I finally left the machine with him to finish the job and he said it took several hours to get it done.

He said that even after installing all the updates from Microsoft Update and several updates from the Toshiba site, Microsoft Update would not make Vista SP1 available as an update. He finally called Toshiba who told him he should download the entire Service Pack from Microsoft and install it manually. After installing SP1 and the Vista Home Premium upgrade, there were about 18 additional updates showing in Microsoft Update. After installing them as a batch, the machine would not reboot. He repaired that using the Repair option from the Vista Home Premium Update disc. He then installed the updates one at a time, which took ages because several of the updates required a reboot after installation, but that did work better. We have no idea why Microsoft Update would not offer Vista SP1 and the Toshiba tech support person would not address the problem other than to refer us to Microsoft.

Originally, I wanted to reformat the HD and install XP Professional, but was warned that might be a major problem because the XP drivers might not be available for the new machine. I was told to check for and download the

XP drivers before attempting to install Windows XP.

I had already installed AOL (my backup ISP) software, some of which Bob felt was rather obtrusive, but had rejected installing their free antivirus and antispyware software. Bob suspects that the AOL software might have been part of the problem with the updates after the Vista Home Premium upgrade, but that was merely conjecture. Maybe I should have let him remove the AOL software to find out, but I didn't know the correct settings to use for AOL without using all their software.

Help For People Who Can't Attend Meetings

I've previously mentioned Hewie Poplock and Mike Ungerman at Central Florida Computer Society trying different online meeting software to help members attend meetings, even when a member can't do it physically. At the Tech SIG this week, Hewie used <http://www.Ustream.tv> to capture the video and sound during the meeting and put it in a file to post on the Internet. Attendees can also join the meeting from home and watch the proceedings, even typing in a question for the moderator to bring up at the meeting. This experiment still needs refinement, such as a dedicated camera operator and more microphones, but see it for yourself at: (Part 1) <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/664934> and (Part 2) <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/665065>.

The reason for two parts is that Denny's Wi-Fi connection dropped us in the middle of the meeting. Hopefully everyone that speaks will be included in the future. If you look closely, it could also be called the Pig SIG/Tech SIG since the SIG meets at a Denny's and

they enjoy food as well <G>. Hewie and Mike will be demonstrating different methods at the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups (FACUG) one-day fall conference October 25, 2008 in Clearwater, FL. A couple folks had minor complaints about the recordings, but I was very impressed. Contact Hewie at <Hewie@hewie.net> if you want more info.

iTurns, A Freebie That Could Be A Big Help

DVDneXtCOPY Inc. announces DVDneXtCOPY iTurns, a tool to make hardware linked music FREE. This brand new one-step tool breaks no laws because it uses procedures not restricted by DRM (Digital Rights Management). DVDneXtCOPY iTurns is available in a completely free version. (DealsGuy Note: The free version has limitations compared to the Pro Version) iTurns software is a virtual program that emulates a CD recorder in your computer system. A built in encoder can transcode any burn job to a portable MP3 music file. Just burn your iTunes music and create a freely portable music library. iTurns will do automatic iD3 tagging on the fly, which allows information such as the title, artist, album, track number, or other information about the file to be stored in the file itself. Just create your portable library and import it to any new computer system, mobile audio device or music player.

Create your own "free library" and move it anywhere without the message "you are not allowed to play this audio file on this system." Read more information about the new DVDneXtCOPY iTurns at <http://www.dvdnextcopyiturns.com>.

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Clean Off Your Discarded Drive With Confidence

Are you replacing your old HD, but want to make sure your data is completely removed? Consider Active@ KillDisk hard drive eraser <http://www.killdisk.com>. I've seen this in a few UG newsletters so it must be pretty reliable. It is powerful software that will destroy all data on your hard drives, and even your floppy drives, completely. They claim this product will make restoration of your deleted data next to impossible. It can also erase a partition, according to their Web site, although I didn't use the product myself. It's free, but there are also pay versions. In fact, the pay version actually conforms to the US Department of Defense cleaning and sanitizing standard DoD 5220.22-M. Visit their Web site for better information.

Here's another popular product to wipe your drive that many people like. Check <http://www.heidi.ie/node/6#Eraser_Features>. This freebie offers multiple types of drive wiping and one that also uses the US Department of Defense cleaning and sanitizing standard DoD 5220.22-M. Like any product, satisfactory results are all in the eye of the beholder.

Excuse Me, But What Time Is It?

How good is your PC's clock keeping time? Windows XP and Vista have a built-in code for setting your clock via the Internet, but that only happens once a week. If you have broadband Internet service, you could change the frequency that your Windows OS will update the clock. Check out <http://www.thinkman.com/dimension4/index.html> where you can get Dimension 4 at no cost and it will set your computer's time from servers on the Internet. There are lots of options including how often to update the time. Check out their Web site for further information on how it works and for the free download.

Another way to do this is to try installing the Internet Time Sync Utility from <http://www.dougknox.com/xp/utils/xp_inet_time.htm> that will also reset the computer's time at whatever interval you wish. Again, it is free and their Web site has further information and the free download.

As with the other items, I have not tried this product.

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>.

NTI Media Maker— Software Review By Bob Clyne

NTI Media Maker 8 has 24 sections divided up under 6 headings on the top-level menu. While the menu structure is logical, it is easy to get lost in there. The layout is as follows with the outer level items on the opening menu and the others accessed from the sub-menus:

Audio
  • Audio CD
  • MP3 Disc
  • Audio Editor

- Music DVD
- Live Audio
- Ripper

Photo
- Photo Disc
- VCD/DVD Slideshow
- Cinematic Slideshow

Backup
- Backup Now
- Copy

Utilities
- Test Drive
- Session Explorer
- Digital Jack
- Jewel Case Maker

Data
- Data Disc
- CD Extra
- Mixed Mode

Video
- Home Video Maker
- VIDEO_TS
- VCD/SVCD
- Digital Flix
- Cinematic Video
- DVD Fit

The following utilities are accessed from the rim of the opening menu and some of them can also be accessed from within some of the other programs:

Disc Info Tools
Erase Disc
Drive Properties
Live Update

I'll try to give a brief description of some of the programs and will go deeper into Home Video Maker.

Home Video Maker

Home Video Maker is the part of the suite that is intended to let you create videos or slideshows. The output choices allow you to create DVDs or videos for iPod, PSP, or Zune. It will also output to MP4, WMV or AVI files. Like most consumer video editing software available, it is a non-linear editor (NLE), which means that it does not alter your source files. It keeps track of your editing and incorporates it in your output files.

When you first open Home Video Maker, you are presented with three tabs and a graphic with a plus sign. Clicking on the plus sign opens a file browser window from which you can select the video or graphic files you wish to incorporate in your project. At this point, it is best to only select the files you want to use in the first chapter. You can then add files for subsequent chapters. When all the desired files have been selected, click on the second tab to do your editing.

Select the file or clip you wish to work on in the left section of the window. The editing tools are rather sparse. You can trim the beginning and end of a file or clip using the sliders with a scissors symbol on them. Trimming the beginning is fairly easy. You can play the clip to the point where you want to start and then drag the left scissors slider over to the progress slider or scrubber. The scrubber can be 'fine' adjusted using the arrows at each end of the progress bar but one click seems to move the scrubber more than one frame and every other click moves the scrubber by an alternate amount. This makes it almost impossible to do any really fine editing. Trimming the end was more of a challenge since the scrubber returned to the beginning as soon as it got to the end, so if you were a little late hitting the pause button, you had to start playing the clip over again. You can just drag the scissors over but then you are trimming blind since the preview window will not show where you are trimming to. In my experience,

when working with clips more than a very few minutes in length, I could not drag the scrubber to position within a clip. When I dragged the scrubber along the timeline, the time counter would go up to a point and then go back and when I positioned the scrubber and then hit play the scrubber would jump back to the position indicated by the time counter and play would begin from there. The preview window would show the picture from where the time counter indicated rather than where the scrubber was. This made accurate trimming very difficult.

There is no provision for splitting a clip, so if you want to delete a section from the middle, you have to trim the end to the start of the material you want to remove. Then bring another instance of the clip in under tab one, go back to tab two and trim the beginning to the end of the material you want to delete. If there are more sections that you want to delete, repeat the foregoing steps.

There are tools to add effects such as, rotate, pan and zoom. These seem to be mostly intended for slideshows but they work on videos also. There is no provision for controlling the amount of panning or zooming though. The default setting is for Auto Pan and Zoom. This may be useful if you want panning and zooming with no regard for what it is panning or zooming to, but I don't know why you would want to do that.

Other tools allow you to choose transitions. The choice of transition is quite limited and noticeably missing are fade and dissolve. There does not appear to be any way to control the duration/speed of the transitions. You can also add text to a clip and add background audio.

Before proceeding to tab three, rename "My Project" and the chapters in the left section of the window, as these names will appear on the menu in tab three.

Tab three is where you set up the menu and the output format. There are several themes or menu templates to choose from which have different numbers of chapters on them. If you have more chapters in your project than are on the menu template, the program creates another menu page for you. You can delete chapters from a menu but not add more chapters to a given template page. The menu item can be moved on the page but not resized. The menu items each consist of a motion thumbnail from the beginning of the chapter and the chapter name under it. You can control the length of the thumbnail motion but there does not appear to be a way to have a still thumbnail or to use something other than the beginning of the chapter for the thumbnail.

You can control the menu background, either from their selection or one of your choosing but you cannot have a motion background. Text and background music can also be added to the menu.

The program provides several output options. You can output as a DVD either directly to the burner or to a VIDEO_TS folder on your hard drive for later burning, but I did not see an option for a double layer DVD. Other output options include iPod, Zune, PSP, MP4, WMV, and AVI.

I recommend writing the DVD files to the hard drive for testing before committing them to a DVD disc. That way if there are any problems, you haven't wasted a DVD or the time to write a RW DVD.

Using Home Video Maker, I created a DVD from several AVI-DV clips by writing it to VIDEO_TS folder on the hard disk but when I played it with Digital Flix there was no sound. It played with sound with several other software players and a Panasonic set-top player. Having one part of the suite create a DVD that another part of the suite won't play correctly seems really strange!

The VIDEO_TS folder created above and the DVD created from it just restarted the chapter when some of the menu choices were made from the players rather than going back to the menu. In the Panasonic set-top player, it restarted the chapter when the Menu button was pressed but went back to the menu when the Top Menu button was pressed. I find this really strange behavior and have never experienced anything similar on either homemade or commercial DVDs.

This should be one of the jewels of the suite but in view of the above limitations and issues with it, I think it is unsuitable for videos and only marginally better for slideshows. The lack of even one level, of Undo makes this a very unforgiving program.

VIDEO_TS is a utility for writing the contents of a VIDEO_TS folder written on the hard drive by Home Video Maker or another application to a DVD disc. It worked fine for me, including giving me the option to erase a previously written DVD+RW disc.

DVD Fit is for compressing material that is too big to fit on a DVD, such as the contents of a double layer DVD down to make it fit on a single layer DVD.

Digital Flix is a generally decent software audio and video player that also has a record function. The only faults I found with it were the same problem with using the scrubber to position in a selection being played that I described above in Home Video Maker and the lack of sound when playing the DVD created by Home Video Maker.

Photo Show and VCD/DVD Slideshow are really the same thing. Both take you to the same program and window with the same options. VCD (Video CD) and SVCD (Super Video CD are formats to put short, low quality videos on a CD. They were used when DVD burners and writeable DVD discs were rare and expensive, but are of questionable use now. Cinematic Slideshow has less photo editing capabilities than the preceding two and requires that you include sound.

There was no manual, even electronic, with this program and I could not find any tutorials on their website. The help function seemed disorganized and frequently it was difficult to tell just which items in the help were applicable to the area where I was and which applied to another part of the suite.

There are a lot of things in this suite and I only looked at a few of them but I cannot recommend NTI Media Maker 8. There is too little help and instruction for the beginner and too little power and flexibility for anyone intending even semi-serious video editing.

I thank Al Gruber for his assistance in this review.

**E-Mail a PDF Document
By Bill Agnew**

**Cloud Computing—
Future of Computing?
By Brian K. Lewis**

E-Mail a PDF Document

I was having trouble e-mailing a Word 2007 document with illustrations to a friend. He couldn't open the attachment. I saved the document as a Word 97-2003 document and tried that, but it didn't help. I tried pasting the entire document (1.3 Meg) directly into the e-mail and found only the text appeared, not the illustrations.

Finally I discovered a way to convert the document to a PDF document. First I had to download Microsoft's "SaveAs PDF and XPS.exe" add-on application. You can find this by clicking on the ? icon in Word's Tool Bar, search for "PDF and XPS," select "Enable support for other file formats," click "Install and use the Publish as PDF and XPS add-in." Then follow the installation instructions. It took less than a minute on my computer.

Now, when you do a "Save As" for a Word document, it offers "Save As PDF or XPS" as a choice. When I did that, my document appeared in PDF format with all illustrations (black & white and color) intact. When I chose it as an attachment to my e-mail, it went through in good form.

There are third-party programs that will convert Word documents to PDF, but this one was readily available from my Microsoft Word 2007 application at no cost.

Dr. Bill Agnew is a former editor of the DATA BUS. He now lives in New Mexico.

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You may not have heard of it, but "Cloud Computing" is the latest buzz-word in computing circles. The question is, just what does it mean? The problem is that at this point, there is no really solid definition for this term. You can search for it and you'll find a number of interpretations. So, from all that I have encountered, I'll try to synthesize one for you.

Cloud computing is being able to access files, data, programs and services all via the Internet. You would have little or nothing stored on your computer, in fact, your computer might simply be a device, desktop or handheld, that can access the web and all of its services. In addition, cloud computing offers the services of enormous computer networks that function as if they were components of a supercomputer. These networks can process tens of trillions of operations per second compared to three billion operations per second for the most powerful desktop computer. This kind of computing power can be used for analysis of risk in financial portfolios, delivering personalized medical information, and powering immersive computer games. These networks use hundreds or thousands of network servers using PC related technology.

I think this excerpt aptly describes the computer cloud. "What is Google's cloud? It's a network made of hundreds of thousands, or by some estimates one

million, cheap servers, each not much more powerful than the PCs we have in our homes. It stores staggering amounts of data, including numerous copies of the World Wide Web. This makes search faster, helping ferret out answers to billions of queries in a fraction of a second. Unlike many traditional supercomputers, Google's system never ages. When its individual pieces die, usually after about three years, engineers pluck them out and replace them with new, faster boxes. This means the cloud regenerates as it grows, almost like a living thing." (Quotation is taken from a Business Week article dated 12-13-2007 by Stephen Baker: 'Google and the Wisdom of Clouds.')

Although some of these services may appear to be only of interest for corporations and their IT departments, services are also being made available for home and small business users. As you might expect, the availability of this Internet computer access depends on fast broadband access. An area where the U.S. lags behind many other countries. In this country we think that having 10-15 megabits/sec on our broadband is really fast. However, in Japan, 50 megabits/sec is closer to the norm, even for home users.

So who would be providing these cloud computing services? Actually, they already exist in the form of Google Apps, Amazon Elastic Compute (EC2), Sapotek's Desktop2 <http://www.desktoptwo.com>, Zim Desk <http://www.zimdesk.com> and Zoho Office <http://www.zoho.com>. (There are also a number of companies providing these services and more to large corporations only.) Sapotek claims to have 175,000 users of their Desktop2 and their servers can handle 8 – 10,000 of them at the

same time. They have a partnership with Sun that will provide the equipment to handle as many as 350,000 users. Every time I look for more information on Cloud Computing I find new companies listed that are offering these services. It is a very rapidly growing industry.

So, if you wanted to take advantage of the services in the cloud, what could you expect to find? Let's take a look at Desktop2. This is a free service that provides normal office applications: writer, spreadsheets, presentations, notepad, and a calendar. It also provides hard drive storage, e-mail, instant messaging, blogs. MP3 player, RSS service and a web site editor. The free version does come with ads as you would expect.

Zimdesks is very similar to Desktop2. Its web applications includes pop3 e-mail, file manager, sidebar, RSS, browser, word processor, spreadsheet, calendar, tasks manager, accessories/widgets, web messenger, video conference, media player, Internet radio, web TV, games, zimcommunity, zimblog, and much more. It is also a free service that incorporates advertising. Like everyone else they have to support themselves somehow.

The third of these services is Zoho Office. On their home page you not only find a list of the services they provide, they are all available for trial simply by clicking on a icon. As with the previous services, the list of applications is quite extensive.

Google Apps is very similar in its offerings to the preceding services. However, it is more oriented towards business users. It does have a free version which might be useful for the individual user.

Zoho uses Java to run its applications on the web. Other services may use Flash or Java. Either of these allow the applications to run in your browser and to operate at reasonable speeds. I have tried out the word processing and found it to be no different than using a word processor on my computer. This is true even though the speed of my Internet connection is usually only 500 – 750 kilobits/sec. When you are using a wireless card modem it is only on very rare occasions that you can match fast DSL speeds. I'm sure that those of you on cable or fast DSL would have no problem using a web-based application, at least with regard to the speed of the application's response. However, if you are preparing a graphic loaded presentation, then you might experience some slow down depending on the speed of your connection.

The idea of relying on Web-based applications and storing data in the "cloud" of the Internet has long been pushed as a way to do business on the road. Now software companies are making entire Web-based operating systems. They present themselves as a complete computer in the cloud and are aimed at a wider audience. These browser-based services could help those who can't afford their own computer.

There are also those who are convinced that this is the future of computing. However, some security concerns should be considered. Unless you know how secure your data is when you use a cloud system, you should be cautious about what you share with the on-line servers. You need to know how your data is protected from other users of the "cloud." As a service provider they should be willing to undergo external audits and/or security certifications. Also you need to know what kind of data protection and data recovery procedures are provided. As has been demonstrated many times, computers do fail. Finally, you need to know what happens to your data in case the company fails or is sold to another entity. This is also not uncommon in the high tech industry. As is always the case, before allowing sensitive information to be used or stored on the web, remember "caveat emptor."

Lastly, consider what computing might be like should the "cloud" become the method of choice. Certainly there would be no need for computers to have all the bells and whistles we now associate with them. Just think about the possible design of a system destined for use solely with cloud computing. It would only need a minimal operating system that would allow the computer to boot, then start the web browser which would connect to the Internet. Your cloud page would be your home page and display your chosen desktop. As for a hard drive, a 10 - 20 gigabyte solid state drive would probably be adequate. USB ports for printers, scanners, possibly other I/O ports would be included. The one thing you would want to be high end would be the graphics system. This would allow display of high resolution graphics used in online games and for viewing videos. It is possible that the graphics processing unit (GPU) would be more powerful that the CPU (central processing unit) or it might even incorporate the CPU. This could all be contained in a 1-2 pound laptop or compressed further into a handheld computer/cell phone. Although some of these characteristics are found now in smart phones, the spread of cloud computing would enhance the features

of these phones. For most of us, the available screen size on these smart phones is not large enough, leaving a market opening for inexpensive laptops such as the ASUS Eee PC or the OLPC (One Laptop Per Child). In neither case would we need an operating system as massive as Microsoft Windows.

One thing is certain, anytime you try to predict the future you usually miss the mark by a mile. So it will be interesting to see what reality brings about over the next few years.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over 35 years, developing software and assembling systems.

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

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Picasa web album

In June I took a brief vacation with son Mike and cocker spaniel Bonnie, touring scenic central West Virginia. We visited the stark rock outcropping known as Seneca Rocks, admired the amazing 110-meter steerable radio telescope at the Green Bank National Radio Astronomy Observatory, and found carnivorous plants in their natural habitat in the cranberry glades botanic area. Together we took over 400 pictures along the way that we culled down to 60-some upon our return. It is often said that the secret of great photographers is that they take hundreds of pictures but save only the one or two best ones. Nobody ever mentions how hard it is to pick out those few winners!

I decided to try and upload the best pictures to one of the online free photo albums. I was already somewhat familiar with Flick'r, but I decided to try the Google-Picasa web album instead. Picasa is an excellent simple photo editor and it gives direct access to the online web album. The album allows 1gb of storage, enough for some 4000 pictures, and you can get even more than that for a small fee.

Since I already had a Google e-mail account, setting up the web album was easy, using the same user name and password. On the web site you can set up separate albums (folders, really) to store pictures in separate categories. I created a new album for my vacation pictures and prepared to upload them. After some trial and error I found it easiest to first assemble the captioned pictures in a Picasa album on my pc and then to upload them all at once to the web album. Once the pictures are uploaded you can add more or delete mistakes, move them around into the desired order, and add or change captions. By default, the photos are automatically converted to the optimum size for display on a computer screen, but there are options for larger (up to 20mb) or smaller file sizes.

Once the album has been installed it is ready to be shared with the rest of the world. You may choose to make your photos public, available to anyone, or keep them private, only accessible to

those you share the URL with. The view album page shows large thumbnails of the photos. They can be viewed individually or as a slide show. The view map button brings up Google maps where you can indicate where you took your pictures. The Organize and Edit captions buttons are self-explanatory. A new features link at the top of the page leads to the latest features added. It is now also possible to upload videos from Picasa to your web album. That might be preferable to using YouTube, unless you want the whole world to admire your movie.

The web album displays the URL of your album site either as the address itself or as a short paragraph of html code that you can insert on your web site. Either way, it is best to copy and paste the information since the URL tends to be lengthy and confusing. My vacation pictures are located at <http://picasaweb.google.com/swipcug/westvirginiavacationjune2008?Authkey=kovcoyrboay>.

To do your correspondents a favor you should convert the URL with SNIPURL <http://snipurl.com> or TINYURL <http://tinyurl.com> to a simpler address, such as <http://snipurl.com/pimspix>. If you have never done that before, you'll find it easy to do. Just go to <http://snipurl.com> (or the TINYURL site) and paste the URL of your album in the box. Specify an easy-to-remember nickname (such as "Pimspix," but only available in SNIPURL) and "snip it!" the shortened URL <http://snipurl.com/pimspix> will be shown and also copied to your clipboard, ready to be pasted in your message.

Gathering CLOUDS

My experience with setting up a photo album "somewhere up there" is a typical example of the current trend towards "cloud" computing. Almost since the beginning of the world wide web we have been using online search engines that access indexed information stored "somewhere up there." many of us have changed from our pc-based e-mail programs to online programs, such as Yahoo or Google Mail, that store our e-mail correspondence on computers "somewhere up there;" somewhere up there in the clouds, as it were.

The push is now to extend cloud computing to office suites. Instead of using expensive Microsoft Office we can choose to use Google docs and conduct all our administrative activities online, with the option of sharing our work with colleagues far away if necessary. Microsoft, always ready to recognize good ideas after others first thought of them, is moving versions of its office suite online under the "live" banner. Others are jostling to join the crowd.

If this trend continues and spreads to other computer activities, our operating systems, whether windows, Mac, or Linux, will become less and less important. The functions of the operating system will be taken over by browsers. To those of us using multiple operating systems, such as windows and Linux, we already find that it makes no difference if we use Firefox in windows or Linux. Similarly, Picasa is Picasa and my new web album is the same no matter how I access it.

So far, that all sounds good. But gathering clouds threaten to bring rain. If everybody is going to use the Internet almost all the time, the current Internet

infrastructure will not be able to keep up. There will be a need for millions of additional servers and drastically increased connection speeds.

The computer industry is aware of that. According to the Economist (May 24, 2008) Microsoft is building a new $500 million data center near Chicago. It will require 3 electrical substations with a total capacity of almost 200 megawatts. Google is said to have 3 dozen data centers with an estimated million individual servers. More and more these extensive data centers are being built in out-of-the-way places near sources of low-cost power, even in Iceland with cheap geothermal power. With all this power consumption computers are becoming a major source of global warming.

To increase transmission speeds the industry is eying the airwave bands that will be freed up in February 2009 when analog TV will be phased out. There are so-called white spaces between the frequency bands assigned to TV broadcasts, and tech companies want to use those buffer zones for lightning-fast data transmissions. Initial tests show that it might wipe out nearby HDTV broadcasts, but they keep working at it. (Scientific American, June 2008)

The computer revolution has just begun!

Collected BY Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group. Web Site: <http://swipcug.apcug. org>. E-mail: <swipcug(at)gmail. com>.

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Using Vista's Hidden Disk Cleaning Options By Vinny La Bash

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

There are many things to like about the disk cleanup utility in Windows Vista. It's built into the operating system, it works, and it's free. It's also a tool that removes many potential problems such as corrupt files that may be causing difficulties or could cause computer ills in the future. One of its minor shortcomings is that it doesn't detect and eliminate wasteful duplicate files. This is a very insignificant quibble as Microsoft never claimed it could do that in the first place. That ability is an item on my wish list for the next version. Overall it's a very useful tool that everyone should be familiar with.

There is more to Disk Cleanup than removing junk files and recovering gigabytes of disk space. It's amazing how 'temporary' files can hang around for months in the little used crannies of a disk drive. Poorly written install and uninstall routines are largely responsible, but software glitches and power hiccups leave their own share of digital detritus laying about.

Systems with more than a terabyte of storage are becoming common, and it's easy to lose track of even the largest files. Try locating a suitcase sized patch of land in an area with the dimensions of a football field and you'll have an idea of what I'm talking about. Aside from taking up space, these useless files can slow down searches, bloat your backups, and make Vista's slow defrag process even slower.

If you're not familiar with how Disk Cleanup works, you can access a good tutorial by clicking the Start icon, and then Help and Support. In the search box type Disk Cleanup, and you will get a list of items directly and indirectly related to the subject. You want the first three or four items in the list.

Let's access the normal version of Disk Cleanup by opening up the Computer icon on the Desktop, right-clicking the C: drive, and choosing Properties.

On the General tab locate the Disk Cleanup button just below and to the right of the disk graphic. You might want to make a note of how much used and unused disk space you have for a before and after comparison. Left-click on the Disk Cleanup button and you will get a message that Windows is doing some calculations. Eventually, you get a dialog box which displays various categories of files you can remove. Windows will let you peek at many of these files, but it's largely a waste of time. I've never found anything worth examining. Make a note of how many types of files Windows can remove, and then close all the dialog boxes.

You've just seen the standard way to access Disk Cleanup. Let's now examine Disk Cleanup with its deep cleaning options exposed. Vista's official file name for the Disk Cleanup utility is cleanmgr. Open the Start globe again and type cleanmgr on the Start Search box at the bottom of the menu. Press Enter and The Drive Selection dialog box appears. This is a great way to eliminate mouse clicks if we want a fast way of getting to a specific drive. However, this method doesn't display the extra functions we're looking for so close the dialog box down.

To access the enhanced options we need to use something called the System Agent or sage in conjunction with cleanmgr. Click the Start globe again and in the Start Search box type

Cleanmgr /sageset:1

Notice the space between cleanmgr and the forward slash. Sageset is a variation of the System Agent utility, and the number 1 allows you to select different cleaning options. You can use any number you want, even zero or negative numbers.

Disk Cleanup will now be running in a special setup mode that offers more cleaning options than the standard default. In addition, the System Agent will remember whatever cleanup options you select. When you run Cleanup again you don't have to make the same selections as long as you use the same number. That's what the System Agent set part does.

Press Enter to run the utility and wait for the Disk Cleanup Settings dialog box to appear. Highlight the individual cleanup options and in some cases there is additional information that is missing from the default dialog box. You also have more cleanup options.

You can select any number of options from just one to all of them. For maximum cleaning, select everything. When you're satisfied with the options you've selected, click the OK button and run the utility. When the job is done, go back and see how much disk space you've recovered. You could be in for a pleasant surprise.

We used the sageset command to set the cleanup options. The system keeps track of what you've done, and it will run the utility according to your specification in the future, but you can't

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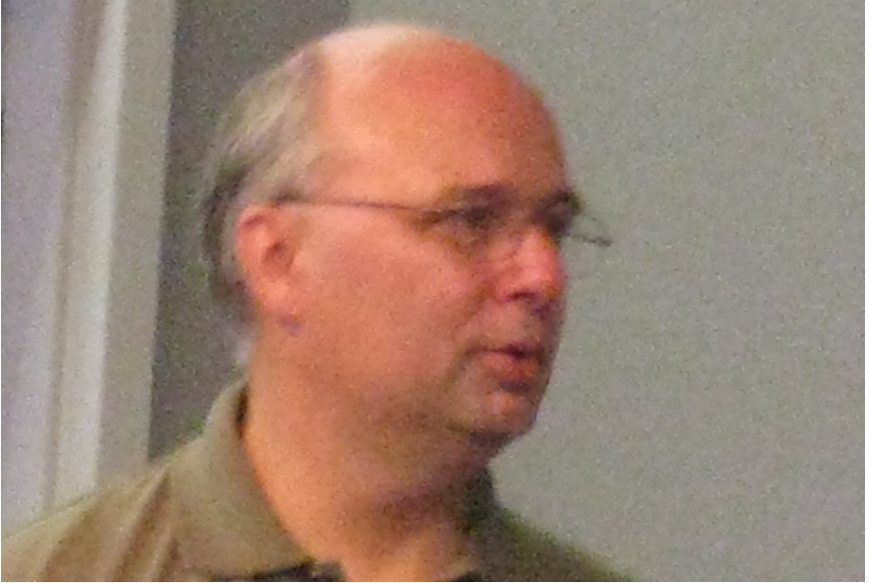
(Above) Deputy Thomas Poulin, of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, talks about crash reconstruction and crash simulation on computers. (Below) Measurement device used at accident scenes.
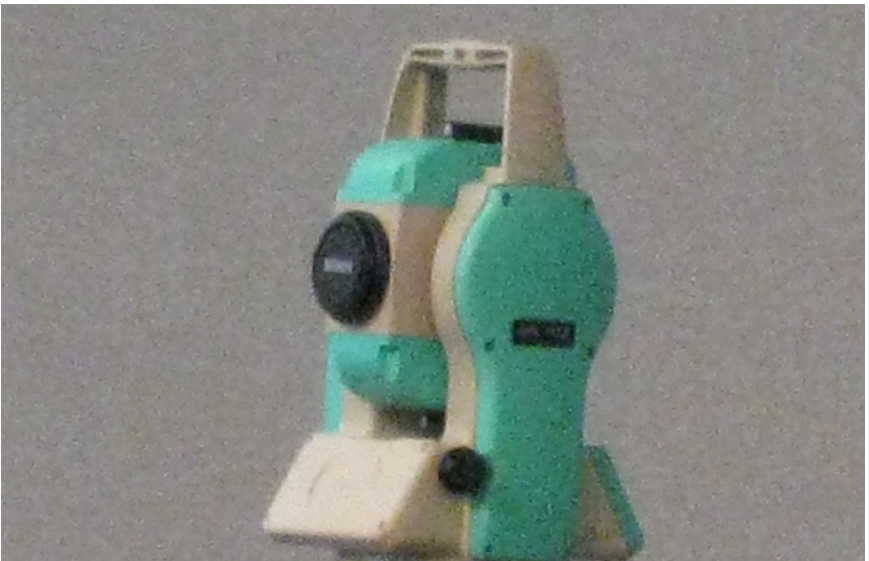
Meeting Pictures

(Above): Members at the refreshment break. (Below): Tom Callow talks about the use of personal computers in distributed computing projects.

**BOARD MEETING
9/14/2008
Carol Sanzi**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
President Mike Bader, 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. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS
Tom Callow, in Bette Gay's absence, read the Treasury report. The amount in the treasury equaled $9,355.90 with $4,657.69 in the bank account and $4,698.21 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 79.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Gary DeNice $14.31 for refreshments. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

It is time for Frederico U. Acerri, Wendell Anderson, and Jack & Claire Baum to renew their memberships.

A discussion of a Linux install fest took place. Warner Mach suggested that the first session should consist of a demonstration of the install. The second session should be the actual installation of Linux on member's machines. Mike Bader will talk with the Linux group to get recommendations about necessary equipment, volunteers, and scheduling.

NEW BUSINESS
Warner Mach is concerned about the delay in the DATA BUS on-line uploads. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach and Internet Committee Chairman Mike Bader will attempt to meet with Bill Landrum to iron out the problems and come to a satisfactory solution.

Warner Mach stated that he feels that SEMCO should research the possibility of creating a building fund. This fund, with possible donations, would be used to purchase a building for SEMCO meetings.

Richard Jackson is continuing his search for guest speakers. Mike Bader will contact Focus Hope for possible contacts.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Chuck Moery seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Appreciation:
Thanks to Jerry Comtois for donation of software used in the September raffle drawing.

Mersenne Primes
At the September meeting Tom Callow discussed "Distributed Computing Projects." One of these projects was GIMPS (Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search). <http://www.mersenne.org>.

On August 23rd, the 45th known Mersenne prime was discovered by a member of GIMPS. The number is $(2^{**}43,112,609)-1$. This is a number with 12,978,189 decimal digits and is the first prime discovered that is over 10 million digits.

On September 6th another Mercenne prime was discovered by a member of GIMPS. The number was $(2^{**}37,156,667)-1$.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

October 12: 1:45 p.m. Micro Center Presentation: Richard Tapaninen of 'Micro Center Tech Support' will discuss the Acer Aspire One AOA 150-1570 and similar very small laptops. Also discussion of Digital TV and NAS drives.

October 12: 3:45 p.m. Backing Your Computer Up in the New Millennium: SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will be Intermediate guest speaker to discuss backing up your computer in the age of the gigabyte and terabyte hard drive, including back up strategies and backing up on-line.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

October 12: 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.

November 3: 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**.**

Oct. 2008 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Oct. 19, 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)**.**

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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)
Nov.5, 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: TBA.

DCOM Computer Club
Oct. 10, 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)
Oct. 11, 9:00 a.m.,(2nd Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup- Detroit
Oct. 12, 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: "Adobe Creative Suite 4 - Part 1" with Special Guest Steve Whatley.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
Oct. 18, 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: "Broadband/VOIP 2008."

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
Oct. 11, 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)
Oct. 14, 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
Oct. 9, 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)
Nov. 4, 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: "What's Hot for the Holidays" by Richard Tapaninen of the Micro Center.

Wayne State University Mac User Group
Oct. 11, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2nd Saturday); at 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

use the sageset command for that. You need to ignore sageset and run the sagerun command instead. From the desktop click the Start globe, and in the Search box type:

Cleanmge /sagerun:1

Press Enter and the system will automatically run in enhanced mode with the preference previously recorded. Run this command anytime you wish from now on. You can always change preferences by rerunning the sageset command with the cleanmgr utility.

Chances are good that a lot of clutter will be removed from your system, and you will see an increase in free space on your system. If you wish to automate the process, you can use the Task Scheduler to run the tool automatically at your convenience.

Vinny La Bash is a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida. Web: <*http://www.spcug.org*>. *E-mail:* <*vlabash(at)comcast.net*>.

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SEPTEMBER REFRESHMENT DONORS
Coordinator: Gary DeNise
Donors:
Al Bochenek
Warner Mach
Carol Sanzi

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of members willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

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

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

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm.................... mdbader@flash.net
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

October 12–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: Micro Center Presentation:** Richard Tapaninen of 'Micro Center Tech Support' will discuss the Acer Aspire One AOA 150-1570 and similar very small laptops. Also discussion of Digital TV and NAS drives.

<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. **Program: Backing Your Computer Up in the New Millennium:** SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will be Intermediate guest speaker to discuss backing up your computer in the age of the gigabyte and terabyte hard drive, including back up strategies and backing up on-line

<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.
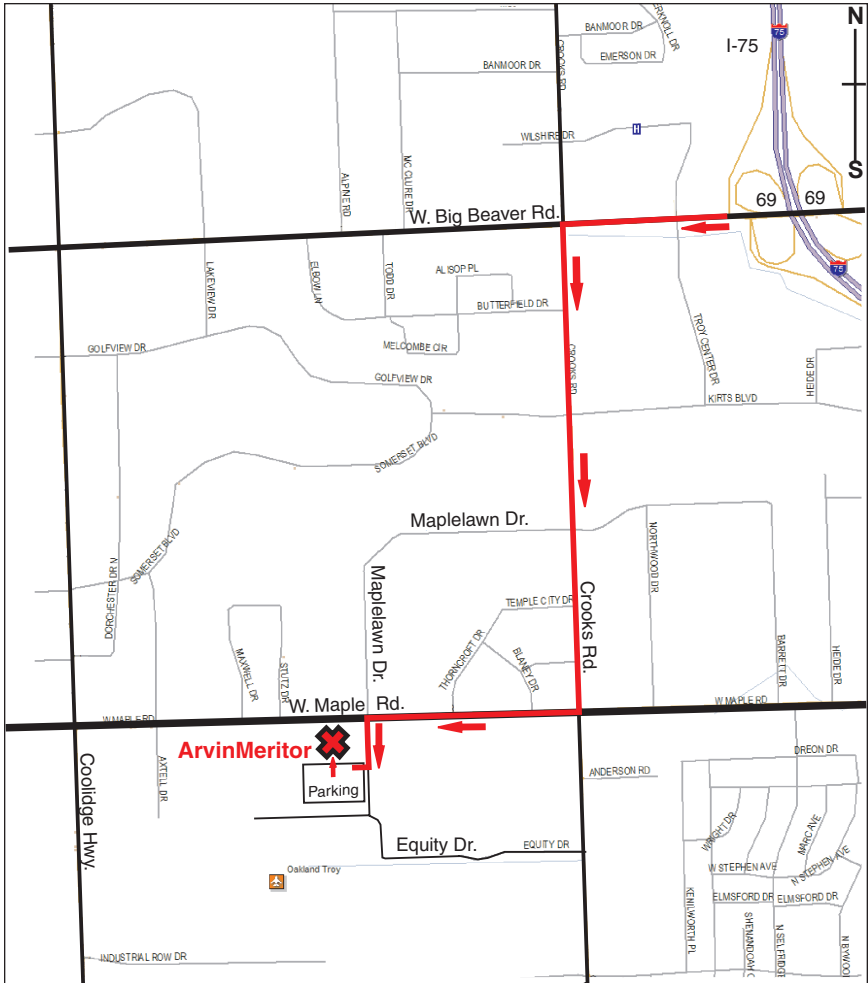
<u>November 9–SEMCO Sunday</u>

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)
October 12
November 9

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