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IN THIS ISSUE

Deals Column, by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click.....	3
Thousands of Free Books Available Online, by Ira Wilsker	5
Computer Performance Considerations, by Gary Bently	8
Improve PC Performance with PerfectSpeed, by Ira Wilsker	10
Ohio Midwest Regional Conference, by Warner Mach	13
Second Life at SEMCO, by Warner Mach	14
Tech Support Cheat Sheet.....	15
APCUG Conference Pictures.....	16
SEMCO Meeting Pictures.....	17
Board Meeting Notes, by Carol Sanzi.....	18
O'Reilly Webcasts, suggested by Franz Breidenich	18
SIGS: IBM, IBM Intermediate, Advanced, Linux	19
DATA BUS Deadline.....	19
Other Groups Calendar of Events.....	20
Computer Resource People	21
SEMCO Calendar	22
Map & Directions to SEMCO Meeting at ESD	23

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DEALS COLUMN
from the DealsGuy
Greater Orlando Computer UG
by Bob "The Cheapskate" Click

A month off makes me lazy and I've wondered if it would even be worth my while to continue the column because I am not getting many new product announcements lately. However, I do have one for this month. I was browsing some items I've saved while reading newsletters I receive, most I've had for ages, but if the product is still a good one, and I've only seen it in two or three newsletters, it should be usable. Perhaps I can keep DealsGuy going a bit longer.

Like many others across the US, I have my own adjustments to make. For me, it's because of the GM bankruptcy. I don't know how many benefits I'll end up losing, but I'm glad my wife and I still have a part-time job to bring in a few extra bucks. However, we get less security work lately because some trade show management officials feel that old grey-haired people don't look good working in their shows, and sometimes our employers must listen to what the customer wants or lose business. Even if discrimination is against the law, employers must please the client to survive.

Also, some of our co-workers are vocal that since we have pensions, we shouldn't be working and taking money away from our younger counterparts who do not have a pension. Those people have not tried to live on a pension, especially a pension rate established 25 years ago when I retired. Most young people don't know that pensions don't grow much over the years. Some of our co-workers also only get a small pension

to live on and could not make it without other income. Trade shows are fun to work, but the job doesn't pay much. There aren't many jobs available for seniors, except volunteer work. Right now (August), we have no security work scheduled until at least October. Some jobless people are taking these part-time security jobs with several companies in an effort to make them full-time by running from show to show with various companies.

I Used That Good Tech Support Again!

I seem to get a lightning strike each year and in spite of having adequate protection, I still lose some equipment. It knocked out my favorite toy again, (my weather station), my router and a few other items. It's hard to safeguard the weather station because the wind anemometer sits on the roof, a vulnerable place for lightning. It seems the DSL filters saved my phones because two phones wouldn't work until I replaced the DSL filters in their phone lines. The phone line for my DSL modem was protected through the UPS, but my router no longer worked, so I finally replaced it. The new D-Link router had a disk with a setup wizard on it that worked fine for the setup, also configuring the security. However, I later found that my Ricoh printer wouldn't print. Other routers I've used sent print jobs just fine without any special configuration. After a lot of "trial and error," I decided my router wasn't talking to the printer, which connects to the network, so I called Ricoh.

A guy named Larry answered immediately and we went to work. He tried many things that included pinging the printer, which worked, but the printer still refused to print, even

though the computer was now talking to the printer. He said my new router, a D-Link, didn't like my printer and he would have to keep trying port changes. After an hour, he found the right combination and I was printing. As before, Ricoh tech support answered in Atlanta and was easy to work with. He kept his cool, even when his new settings didn't seem to work, or I made a mistake when instructed to punch certain keys.

I noticed my DSL was running slower than usual, but running the computer directly from the modem worked fine. I was unable to find the D-Link free tech support phone number on the Web site so I e-mailed them for a phone number and finally was able to call their tech support. After some difficult time, they improved it. They said they were based in California, but didn't sound like it. Seems the modem and the router both had the same IP address.

However, I now couldn't print again, but another call to Ricoh fixed that. I told a friend about the good experience with Ricoh and he asked if I had talked to HP's tech support lately. He said he called HP tech support recently and talked to a guy in India. He had problems understanding him and nothing they tried was working. He said the guy finally hung up on him; and still no solution. My friend is quite computer literate so I doubt he was the problem.

All About Charts

This product is said to be for software developers, but I'll pass it on because it has a discount and I don't know how many readers develop software. This had the most confusing write-up so I

have edited out the hype and tried to make sense of what's left.

ArtfulBits aiCharts for Android is intended for software developers to use as an easily integrated part of their applications to allow representing and visualizing charts of different kinds. It is developed especially for the Android platform and is compatible with Android version 1.1, Cupcake 1.5 and Android 2.0. Presently, it supports the following chart types: Line, Spline, Point, Bubble, Column, Stack Column, Stack Column 100%, Bar, Stack Bar, Stack bar 100%, Area, Spline Area, Stack Area, Stack Area 100%, Pie, Polar, HiLoCandlestick, Funnel, Pyramid.

aiCharts does not use any low level native libraries and is 100% safe for Android OS users as it runs in a completely safe managed environment of Dalvik Java VM. Online documentation with samples and tutorials gives developers all the necessary information to easily integrate and provide support for applications with aiCharts. Online documentation will be updated frequently.

A subscription guarantees fast feedback, access to the internal bug tracking system and the latest solutions. Any problems that may occur will be reviewed and resolved as soon as possible, and solutions and/or patches will be available before the release of the next version. aiCharts creators assure that all users will get feedback and the ArtfulBits team will do everything possible to meet customers' demands, and to perfect aiCharts.

This opportunity seems more interesting considering the recently announced ADC 2 (Android Developer Challenge 2) launched by Google

aiming to support developers in their efforts.

Get a 50% discount by using the code “DealsGuy-Customers-Choice” when ordering. Bonus is an added 1Year Subscription. Limitations are: code works from September 01, 2009 until November 01, 2009. The code works on a Developer License, Bundle 3 and Bundle 5 and does not work on a Subscription only. That would help a lot on the MSRP of \$299.

Product page: <<http://www.artfulbits.com/products/>>

YouTube demo: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ho5wiV-o8g>>

Purchase: <<http://www.artfulbits.com/Products/Purchase.aspx>>

Someone Sent Me This, But Didn't Want To Be Named

Ever wonder if somebody might have plugged a USB device into your computer for some reason? People sometimes like playing tricks on you (like a surprise midi file you didn't expect), or might browse through your HD and even copy items to, or from, a flash drive or some other media, but this product might provide some details if a flash drive was used. USBDeview finds out what USB devices are currently connected to your computer and also sees which devices were connected before. It tells you the time the device was plugged/unplugged (if the machine hasn't been rebooted). Other information possible is; device name/description, device type, serial number (for mass storage devices), VendorID, ProductID, and more.

USBDeview allows you to uninstall USB devices that you previously used, and disconnect USB devices currently connected to your computer. Unfortunately it can't figure out

which files might have been copied from, or to, your machine, or even if that actually happened. Use your best judgments if you suspect that. Check this out at <http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/usb_devices_view.html>. This is a freebie and works on newer Windows systems. The Web site says no need to install it, just run the .exe file. I thought it sounded interesting.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>



**Thousands of Free Books
Available Online
By Ira Wilsker**

I enjoy reading. I find that reading is intellectually stimulating, broadens my horizons, and provides vicarious experiences. My daughters grew up in a home full of books where they all became avid readers; this substantially contributed to their academic and professional achievements.

My students at LIT should be reading more, but the cost of books is a deterrent, and a trip to the college or public library is often an inconvenience. Many of today's students have grown up in the era of online information, e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo!, and Google

and to them “online” is their primary information resource. Now there are Internet resources where anyone can read literature of any genre, including hundreds of current textbooks, for free. Depending on the rules of the respective websites, these complete books can be read online in a browser window, or downloaded in a variety of formats, often including the popular and universal PDF format.

The granddaddy of the free online library is the Project Gutenberg at <<http://www.gutenberg.org>>. According to its website, “Project Gutenberg is the first and largest single collection of free electronic books, or eBooks. Michael Hart, founder of Project Gutenberg, invented eBooks in 1971 and continues to inspire the creation of eBooks and related technologies today.” The mission statement of Project Gutenberg is simple but succinct, “To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks.” Project Gutenberg has the full-length unabridged copies of over 30,000 titles on its servers, and links to over 100,000 titles located on other services. In addition to the printed word, Project Gutenberg also has hundreds of audio books available for download. About 400 of the audio books have a very realistic computer generated voice that provides the audio, and another 600 are recorded human voices. There are also about 150 recordings of mostly classical music, and a few dozen historically significant recordings from no less than the likes of Thomas Edison. Project Gutenberg has books available in many languages with the largest number being in English, and even some written in Mayan or Yiddish. I know people who download the audio books in MP3 format, burn them to CD, and play them

in the car. I know of one individual who has downloaded several of the Edgar Allen Poe audio books, and plays them from an MP3 player as spooky stories for the kids around the campfire.

I teach economics every semester at LIT and try to instill in my students some of the history, culture, and philosophy that created our economic system. While he is briefly recognized in our economics books, Adam Smith is believed by many to be the father of classical economic philosophy. The full unabridged version of his most recognized tome “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,” better known as the “Wealth of Nations” is on my recommended reading list. In the past the students had to compete for the limited number of copies available in the library or purchase a copy, an often difficult task for a cash strapped college student. Today’s college student, or anyone for that matter, can simply go online and read it on his monitor, or download a copy for future reference. This is but one example of how technology can be positively used to expand the minds of society, and provoke inspired thought and discussion. The book “Wealth of Nations” is but one of many thousands available for free online at Project Gutenberg.

While not as extensive as Project Gutenberg, one of my favorite free eBook websites is Feedbooks at <<http://www.feedbooks.com>>. Feedbooks are almost all in PDF format, and can be read unabridged online or downloaded for reading at the individual’s convenience. Feedbooks has books in four languages, English, French, German, and Spanish, and from hundreds of authors. Feedbooks’

selection is exemplary by having what may be the complete works of many authors, including Arthur Conan Doyle, 32 titles; Charles Dickens, 45 titles; Edgar Rice Burroughs, 68 books; Washington Irving; Henry David Thoreau; Jonathan Swift; and hundreds of other authors. Feedbooks is totally searchable, but I enjoy browsing my favorite categories, such as Novels (1382 books), History (111 books), Politics (32 books), Humor (68 books), and Non-Fiction (83 books). There is an extensive “Young Readers” selection composed of over 100 titles that would be good for parents to read to their children, or as a reading experience for the kids themselves. Titles include such classics as Grimm’s Fairy Tales, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Peter Pan, American Fairy Tales, Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen, Black Beauty, and over a hundred other age appropriate titles.

Many of us are all too aware of the high cost of textbooks. There is currently a move on to publish current textbooks online for free. While this project is in its infancy, there are already many recently published e-textbooks available online at <<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com>>. It is worth noting that hundreds of college faculty have already adopted these free titles. Students typically have the option of reading the chapters online for free, or printing individual chapters for a nominal fee (about \$2 per chapter), printing the entire book, or purchasing a bound copy of the book. Faculty may request a free bound copy as well as support materials such as test banks, PowerPoint slides, instructors’ manuals, and other supplementary materials, just like the existing commercial textbooks. Even for those who are not currently

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Computer Performance Considerations By Gary Bently

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When I evaluate what might be done to maximize the performance of a computer system, whether that be a system already in use or one I might be specifying for order (i.e., specifying the hardware with a particular level of performance in mind for the intended application) I look at several key factors.

The most critical factor is how much system RAM is available (if you are ordering a new system then you can also order faster RAM and be cognizant of addressing issues). I will state flatly that, all factors being equal, the more RAM available, the faster your computer system will operate. In the same vein, if you want to make full use of that system RAM, get an external graphics card with its own RAM so you don't force your system to share RAM with the video display. If you are specifying a new computer, get the fastest FSB (front side bus) speed you can afford with the microprocessor and then match the RAM bus speed to take advantage of that high bus speed. Don't let a computer maker fool you with a low system price while handing off old slow RAM to you when the motherboard and processor would support faster bus speed RAM. New systems will always use DDR RAM, so that should not be a consideration (and older systems will not be able to use

it). Don't be confused by discussions of virtual memory and page files. If you have a large amount of RAM (1 GB or more with Windows XP—3 or 4 GB with Vista, the OS memory hog of all time), your system will rarely need to page out process memory onto the hard drive paging file.

You can check that in Task Manager (hit CTRL SHIFT ESC or CTRL ALT DEL or right click the Task Bar and select Task Manager) by looking at the Performance tab and the Physical Memory Total in conjunction with the Commit Charge. The Physical Memory Total is the amount of RAM you have in your system. The Commit Charge is the total memory allocated to programs and the operating system. If the Commit Charge (Total or Peak) doesn't exceed the amount of RAM, then the hard drive pagefile is rarely if ever being used and your system should be running at full RAM speed without hard drive performance issues (except when loading the OS and starting an application, etc.). You can also use Performance Monitor (Start, Administrative Tools, Performance) and look at the Memory, Pages Output/Sec parameter. Even if the amount of committed memory exceeds available RAM, if the actual Pages Output/ Sec is low or zero most of the time (quoting Microsoft) there is no significant performance problem related to available RAM. I doubt there would be any reason for the typical home user to require a 64-bit computer in order to utilize sufficient RAM.

The second most critical factor is the performance of the hard drive, i.e., the amount of utilization of your hard drive (present or anticipated for the application), the speed at which the drive platters rotate, and the speed of the

interface to your hard drive. You never want to reach 50% of capacity of your hard drive. The more data you have on a hard drive the farther the disk drive read/write head has to move inward on the spinning platter to get to the data (on the average). This increases the seek time, the time required for the read/write head to position itself over the desired concentric data track on the spinning disk platter. So, use a hard drive with sufficient storage that you do not exceed 40% or so of the storage capacity (high performance server hard drives often are destoked or short stroked, i.e., limited to 40% or less so as to keep the data on the outer edge of the platters where it can be quickly reached).

Once the read/write head reaches a track then the rotational speed of the platter comes into play, introducing latency, the time required for the desired sector of the track to rotate into position beneath the head. How do you reduce latency? Get a hard drive that spins as fast as you can afford. Most desktop hard drives now spin at 7200 RPM (don't let them slip you a 5400 RPM drive on your desktop or your laptop!). If your drive has a slower RPM, you can increase performance by purchasing a 7200 RPM drive. Note that high performance server drives spin at 10,000 and 15,000 RPM, but those drives are expensive. If you are evaluating a replacement drive (or specifying the hard drive in a new system), look at the access time parameter for the drive. This will generally be around 11 milliseconds for 7200 RPM desktop PC ATA/SATA drives. The access time will include seek time and rotational latency. As for the type of interface, ATA drives (which peaked at around 133 MB/sec interface performance, setting aside internal data

rate of around 60 MB/s and PCI bus rate considerations) are no longer offered, so you will see SATA (serial ATA) drives in a new computer.

I wouldn't bother attempting to replace an ATA drive in an old PC with a SATA drive. You would need a SATA controller card as well as SATA drive and you might as well just purchase a new computer. The current SATA interface rate is 3 Gbps (the initial SATA interface was 1.5 Gbps), i.e., 3 gigabits per second. That translates to approximately 300 MB/sec. However, the actual rate that the read head can read the data off the spinning platter of the drive is closer to 100 MB/sec (the internal data rate). You therefore can benefit by having a drive with a large cache memory, where a large amount of data has been read internally by the hard drive before the interface is accessed, at which time the interface can burst perform at the full interface speed of 3 Gbps/300 MB/sec.

I note that even the expensive server grade SCSI and SAS drives have about that same external interface transfer rate, i.e., 300 – 320 MB/sec, so their increased performance is coming directly from the high rotational speeds (10 – 15 K) and fast seeks, giving access times of 3 – 5 ms vs. 11 ms or so for desktop SATA drives. Defragmenting your drive regularly will help keep the drive operating at peak efficiency.

A less critical factor is the speed of the microprocessor itself (FSB considerations aside as they relate to RAM access speed). A faster microprocessor or a dual or quad core processor will allow applications, their processes and threads to execute faster (to actually run the microprocessor instructions of which a program is

composed) once the instructions and data reach the microprocessor.

So, if you have processing intensive applications like video or music (studio) production and editing (or scientific number crunching), faster and more core processors will speed things up considerably, but only if you have plenty of RAM and a high performance hard drive.

Mr. Bentley studied electrical engineering at the University of Texas, began working in the electronics industry in 1978 with GTE Network Systems (Lenkurt), then software engineering with various startups in the 1980's, designing and implementing, among other things, pre-Internet e-mail communications systems multitasking on Intel platforms and MSDOS PC's. 1984 - 1986. Gary now provides Information Technology consulting services in the El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico areas. Gary has edited and contributed articles to the award-winning Southwest International Personal Computer Club monthly magazine, "Throughput," since December, 2003. Web: <<http://www.swipcc.org>>. E-mail: <[bentley.gary\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:bentley.gary(at)gmail.com)>.



**Improve PC Performance
with PerfectSpeed
By Ira Wilsker**

One of the most common pleas for help from readers of this column is to improve the performance of their computers. A common thread is that the computer was fast when new, but is now frustratingly slow. Common solutions include performing normal maintenance tasks such as deleting useless files on the hard drive, defragging the drive,

cleaning the registry, and tweaking Windows settings. I recently had the opportunity to try a \$30 software product "PerfectSpeed" from Raxco Software.

One of my daughters recently brought me her five-year-old Compaq notebook computer, a relic with the old style Celeron processor, XP Home, 40-gig hard drive, and 512 megs of memory. It was very slow to boot, sometimes taking up to 10 minutes to boot, and when shutting down would take a like amount of time, or not shut down at all. Loading programs such as Word were agonizingly slow, her browser (Firefox) would take several minutes to load, and overall performance was dismal. When new, the computer was comparatively fast as I had doubled the memory from its factory installed 256 megs, to 512. With the price of memory being fairly reasonable, I had considered purchasing another stick or two of memory, and replacing one or both of the 256 sticks with a 512-meg or 1-gig stick; there are only two memory slots on the motherboard.

My first step was to do what I do on all computers that I work on, and that is to do a comprehensive scan for malware. I performed a full scan with an updated MalwareBytes AntiMalware, and other than several tracking cookies, her computer was clean. For verification, I then ran a freshly updated a-squared, which is both anti-malware and antivirus, and other than some more questionable cookies, and some suspicious traces of malware that had likely been removed previously, her computer was clean. She does have a major security suite installed which is auto-updated frequently, and performs scheduled

scans, a most worthwhile precautionary activity. I used MSCONFIG to check her startup files, and found an excess of unnecessary programs loading at boot, which I unchecked; since they will not be loading at subsequent boots, her boot process will be faster, performance will be improved because less system resources are used and therefore free, and there will likely be fewer software conflicts and crashes. Since fewer programs will be loaded, shutdown will also be faster.

My next decision that I had to make was what utilities to use to conduct performance improving maintenance on her computer. There are several utilities available that can perform that function, but I was tempted to try something new from a Maryland company that I knew from prior experience published excellent quality software, Raxco Software. Raxco recently released its PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer 2.0, retailing for about \$30 for a single license, with a 3-license pack currently on a promotional price of \$39.99 (regularly \$59.99), and a 10-pack for \$99.99. A fully functional 15 day free trial is available for download from <http://www.perfectdisk.com/products/home-perfectspeed/free-trial>. I installed PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer on her computer, and put it to work.

The first task is to click on the “Performance Check” button which scans the registry for errors, checks for useless clutter and duplicate files on the hard drive (Free Space check), looks for “privacy traces” such as cookies, and then checks the hard drive for fragmentation. After running the Performance Check, the performance status gauge on the top right corner showed her computer’s status as “Poor.”

Her registry had over a thousand errors, there was about 2 gigabytes of useless files on her hard drive, she had hundreds of cookies and other privacy traces (but no tracking cookies as they had been deleted by the previous malware scans), and a terribly fragmented hard drive.

With my approval, I allowed PerfectSpeed to clean the registry. It uses a proprietary system to safely clean the registry without threatening the performance of valid programs. This process removes obsolete registry entries that can degrade performance, and lead to a host of other problems. A corrupted or bloated registry can also lead to slow boots and difficult shutdowns. After PerfectSpeed cleaned the registry, I allowed it to reclaim space on the hard drive by deleting hundreds of obsolete temporary files, thousands of old browser cache files, useless duplicates of files, and other debris left on the hard drive. The “Traces” scan detected data on her hard drive that could be a privacy issue, such as browser cookies, Internet history, and other privacy threats. In this case, I chose not to delete the browser history, and many of the cookies, as their convenience value outweighed the small amount of space they take up on the hard drive. It is a proven fact that the more fragmented a hard drive, the longer it takes to read and write files, a major drag on performance. PerfectSpeed has a Microsoft certified defragmentation utility that optimizes the hard drive for maximum drive performance. By rearranging files on the hard drive, and writing them in contiguous sectors and tracks, the drive does not have to work as hard when reading and writing data. This speeds up all of the drive related performance issues, often resulting in significant increases in speed. It took

about 40 minutes to defrag her hard drive, a time no doubt increased by the high degree of fragmentation present on her drive before the optimization. Raxco is recognized for the excellence of its PerfectDisk series of disk optimizers, and that pedigree was evident in the defrager in PerfectSpeed.

After I completed the optimization process, which took about an hour in this case, I shut down the computer and asked my daughter to turn it on. It booted quickly, much to her surprise. I asked her to load Word and Firefox, which loaded very quickly, compared to before the optimization. I asked her to shut down the computer, which she did; the blue shutdown screen appeared, and in a matter of seconds, it disappeared, and the computer turned itself off. The grin on her face was all of the compensation that I needed.

PerfectSpeed is not just for running on demand, as it also has an “AutoPilot” feature which will periodically run the optimization utilities at scheduled times, and when the computer is on but idle or in a state of low system activity. With AutoPilot engaged, the computer will be re-optimized on a regular basis, maintaining a high level of performance.

There are many tweaks which can be implemented in Windows to make incremental improvements in performance, security, and appearance. PerfectSpeed has a “Tweak Your PC” button which displays the tweaks that are available, with a “Learn More” link adjacent to each one which will open a balloon-window with a description of the tweak.

PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer worked well on her computer and made a dramatic improvement in its performance. While

the features offered by PerfectSpeed are comprehensive and appropriate, and do an excellent job at what they do, the one feature that it is lacking that would also contribute to PC optimization is a startup manager. If Raxco will include a startup manager in its next version, PerfectSpeed may be unbeatable as an optimizer. Still, as it stands in its current version 2.0, PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer did an outstanding job in cleaning up my daughter’s computer, and dramatically improving its performance. Based on my experience with it, Raxco’s PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer is a winner, and should be strongly considered by anyone who wants an optimized PC getting all of the performance he paid for in a machine. I recommend that readers download the free 15-day trial version <www.perfectdisk.com/products/home-perfectspeed/free-trial> and experiment with it. Once you find that it will likely improve the performance of your computer, an affirmative decision to purchase PerfectSpeed will be an easy one to make.

WEBSITES;

<<http://www.perfectdisk.com/home>>.

<<http://www.perfectdisk.com/products/home-perfectspeed/free-trial>>.

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>.





Ohio Midwest Regional Conference By Warner Mach

The following SEMCO members traveled to the Ohio Midwest Regional Conference in Newark Ohio (August 28, 29, 30): Mike Bader, Franz Breidenich, Bob Clyne, Richard Jackson, Warner Mach. Everyone stayed at the “Cherry Valley Lodge” where the conference took place. (See pictures on page 16).

On Friday, August 28, the annual APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups) business meeting was held and we had an opportunity to meet folks from other groups in surrounding states. The President of APCUG, Jay Ferron, talked about some of the benefits for clubs belonging to APCUG, including “Sharepoint,” a common web area for sharing articles and information between clubs.

On Saturday, August 29, the breakfast speaker was Scott Moore, V.P. of marketing for “Ai Squared,” who showed “ZoomText Express”—a program to “blow up” text on the computer screen and otherwise make it more readable. Mr. Moore indicated that he would be providing free copies of this software to attendees.

The bulk of the sessions took place on Saturday. I personally attended:

(1) Session on “Portable Applications” (Applications that you can carry on a USB memory device). This was given by John Kennedy, who is known as “Free John” because of his dedication to free software. This was an excellent presentation.

(2) A presentation on Linux given by Don Corbet, “The Linux Guy.” Mr.

Corbet showed a Linux installation and talked about the varieties of Red Hat Linux releases. He also talked about virtualization issues.

(3) “Free and Open Source Software” was a session given by John Kennedy (“Free John”). He discussed free software that individuals could take advantage of. A couple of programs that I found interesting were: (a) “SIW” (Systems Information for Windows) from <http://www.gtopala.com>. This program promises to tell you “everything you want to know about your computer.” (b) The CD burner application for XP: <http://cdburnerxp.se/en/home>.

(4) “Face Book & Social Programs” was given by Angie Palmer, who outlined the basics of using Face Book. An interesting sidelight that came out during the Q&A was the amount of inter-family political problems sometimes caused by Face Book.

At lunch on Saturday, a presentation was given by Magix: How to edit and organize pictures and videos. The supper presentation was on “Windows 7.”

On Sunday, August 30, I attended a session on “User Groups and Second Life.” This was given (remotely) by Don Singleton of APCUG. There were some technical problems with this session which we largely avoided when Don Assisted, later, in our SEMCO Second Life presentation of September 13.

There was also a “User Group and Vendor Panel Discussion” on Sunday afternoon.

The conference was very worthwhile and I was sorry that I could not attend many of the other sessions, including Microsoft “Live Meeting,” “Running 3 OS’s on a Mac,” “Digital Photography,” “Hard Disk Destruction,” etc.

A drawing of prizes during the conference assured that everyone went away with a physical reward as well as the informational reward of the sessions.



**Second Life at Semco
By Warner Mach**

At the September 13 SEMCO meeting Warner Mach (in house) and APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups) Director Don Singleton (remotely) gave a tour of the virtual world of “Second Life,” via their “in world” avatars “Warner Magneto” and “DJ Earnshaw,” respectively.

Mr. Singleton showed the APCUG room (at Plush Nonprofit Commons (146,18,16)) and outlined the plans to use this as a meeting area for computer group members.

Leaving the APCUG room, the two avatars “teleported” to various areas in Second Life, including the “Happy Hippo Education Center” (at Kinetix(173,51,21)). At the Happy Hippo Center, Don demonstrated how to build a table. The center guides new users through the building process.

Next in the tour was “Sploland” (at Sploland(149,132,23)) where various entertaining science exhibits can be seen. Then over to “Vassar Island” (Vassar(110,112,27)) to visit the Sistine Chapel. After this, there was a trip to the “Sci-Fi Geeks Museum” (at Indigo(74,243,25)) where, on the Holodeck, we were able to bring up various virtual-world-within-the-virtual-world exhibits, including the fierce “Alien.” (See picture on page 17). Then off to the “International

Spaceflight Museum” (at Spaceport Alpha(103,132,23)).

All of the places visited, and many more, are posted in the “!Cool Places” notecard in the APCUG room.

To get hooked up with Second Life, go to <<http://secondlife.com>>. There are different categories of membership but, as long as you don’t wish to own land, you can get aboard for free. You will download a client application which will contact Second Life when you log in.

Second Life can be run on Windows or Mac or Linux. For Windows, minimum requirements: (1) Cable or DSL (Note: I am able to use a Verizon Wireless Card). (2) XP or Vista. (3) 800 MHZ Pentium III or Athlon, or better. (4) Memory: 512 MB or better. (5) Screen resolution: 1024x768 pixels. For specific graphic card compatibility see <<http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/?lang=en>>.

Second Life was founded by Philip Rosedale.

There is a currency exchange for money. One US dollar (\$) is typically about 250 “Linden Dollars” (L\$). But many items in Second Life are free.

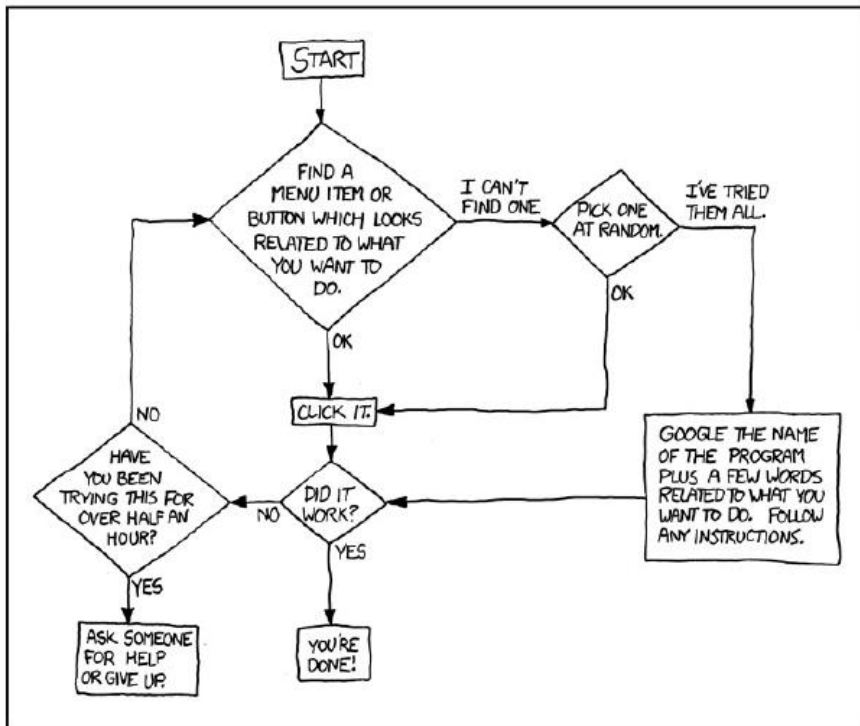
Second Life was, in part, inspired by the book “Snow Crash” by Neal Stephenson. In the book, the protagonists move easily between the real world and the virtual world.



Tech Support Cheat Sheet

DEAR VARIOUS PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, CO-WORKERS,
AND OTHER "NOT COMPUTER PEOPLE."

WE DON'T MAGICALLY KNOW HOW TO DO EVERYTHING IN EVERY
PROGRAM. WHEN WE HELP YOU, WE'RE USUALLY JUST DOING THIS:



PLEASE PRINT THIS FLOWCHART OUT AND TAPE IT NEAR YOUR SCREEN.
CONGRATULATIONS; YOU'RE NOW THE LOCAL COMPUTER EXPERT!

Note: Above cartoon courtesy of Randall Monroe <<http://xkcd.com/627/>>.



APCUG Conference Pictures



(Above): Entrance to the Cherry Valley Lodge in Newark Ohio. (Below): Conference attendees Bob Clyne, Franz Breidenich, Mike Bader, Richard Jackson.



SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): Avatar Warner Magneto meets the Alien on the Holodeck during the presentation of "Second Life." (Below): Tom Callow discusses "Windows 7."





BOARD MEETING
9/13/2009
Carol Sanzi

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also attending were provisional SIG-Linux Chairman Ray McLaughlin and Gary DeNise. The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Treasurer, Bette Gay, reported that the amount in the treasury totaled \$9,746.81 with \$5,011.69 in the checking account and \$4,735.12 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 79. It is time for Paul Cervero, Carol Sanders, and Wilbur S. Shaffmaster to renew their memberships.

NEW BUSINESS

Ray McLaughlin requested that the Board recognize SIG-Linux. Bob Clyne moved to certify SIG-Linux as an official special interest group. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried. Ray McLaughlin and Mike Rudas will co-chair the group pending the election of a chairman.

Tom Callow suggested that outside speakers be scheduled during the SIG-IBM Intermediate time slot. He has a personal conflict that would interfere with him presenting at that time.

Carol Sanzi informed the board that a teacher at Beckham Elementary School in Detroit needs technical

assistance setting up a computer lab. Mike Bader, Bob Clyne, and Richard Jackson said they may be able to help.

Richard Jackson presented the possibility of sponsoring a fundraiser for Paws for a Cause. This would be in the form of a poker tournament. The board declined to take action.

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



O'Reilly Webcasts
Suggested by
Franz Breidenich

SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich has pointed out an excellent set of webcasts that are sponsored by O'Reilly Publishing. The webcasts include computing issues and also broader technical issues. The web site is at <<http://oreilly.com/webcasts>>. The press release notes the following:

... The O'Reilly Radar Global Issues Webcast Series will feature scientists, technologists, and other thought leaders seeking to inform and engage O'Reilly's audience about the most pressing issues of the day, including energy, climate, the environment, and globalization. The series, offered free of charge, is designed to educate as well as involve the audience in an ongoing discussion about these topics.

The site allows the visitor to sign up for real-time future webcasts and to view archived webcasts which have already taken place. Note: Some archived webcasts do not actually have a video associated with them. If clicking

[Continued on Page21](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

Oct. 11: 1:45 p.m. Security: Christian Putt of MicroWorld Technologies Inc., of Farmington Hills, will talk about eScan products: AntiVirus and Internet Security Suite.

Oct. 11: 3:45 p.m. Utilities for fun and efficiency: Tom Callow will be demonstrating a few of the utilities for your computer that can dress it up, make it easier to use or help you work more efficiently.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich



SIG-LINUX
Ray McLaughlin

Oct. 26 (4th Mon.): 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. 27 (4th Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Ray McLaughlin will discuss "Wine"—A system which allows Windows programs to run on Linux.

Nov. 2009 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMC0 Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Oct. 18, 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).

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

Nov. 4, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); (New Location). Black River Country Club, Port Huron. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <compinfo@hughes.net>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: "Computer Tips for the Holiday Season".

Focus Hope IT Users Group

Nov 7, 9:30-11:30 a.m. (1st Saturday-usually), 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <<http://www.fhitug.org/meetings/meetings.htm>>. Topic: TBA."

HUG (Holly User Group)

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

MacGroup- Detroit

Oct. 25, 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: "Apple's New Snow Leopard Operating System. Mac OS X 10.6." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics. (MAC User Group)

Oct. 17, 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: TBA.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

Oct. 10, 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 <president@mdlug.org>. Topic: TBA.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

Oct 13, 6:00 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): MUG meetings are at The Farmington Community Library–Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topic: TBA.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

Oct. 8, 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://tinyurl.com/royaloakcc>>.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Nov. 3, 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: "To be announced by Richard Tapaninen from Micro Center." .

Continued from Page 18

on the entry does not bring up a video then that means that it does not exist.

Upcoming webcasts:

Tuesday, October 13: Architecting Applications for the Cloud. Presented by Jorge Noa.

Thursday, October 15: Nuclear Energy: Future Directions. Presented by Per F. Peterson.

Some Archived webcasts:

October 1: How To Save Math Education (And A Tiny Piece Of The World Along With It). Presented by Dan Meyer.

September 30: 97 Things Every Project Manager Should Know. Presented by Barbee Davis.

September 29: Psychotronica: Abusing and Leveraging Intelligence from Social Networking. Presented by Nitesh Dhanjani.

September 25: 8 Steps to Microsoft Project Success. Presented by Dux Raymond Sy.

September 24: Cloud Security and Privacy. Presented by Subra Kumaraswamy and others.

September 23: Energy Literacy – Understand, Track, and Reduce Your Energy Consumption. Presented by Saul Griffith.

Etc.



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
Relational Database Programming: Lis

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
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am-8pm.....BerLLis@comcast.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm.....jvanders@myself.com
Yuhasz, Steve.....Help@yuhasz.org



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR

**Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield, MI. 48076**

Oct. 11—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 p.m. **Program: Security:** Christian Putt of MicroWorld Technologies Inc., of Farmington Hills, will talk about eScan products: AntiVirus and Internet Security Suite.

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 p.m. **Program: Utilities for fun and efficiency:** Tom Callow will be demonstrating a few of the utilities for your computer that can dress it up, make it easier to use or help you work more efficiently.

SIG-ADVANCED, Oct. 26, 2009 (4th 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.

LINUX DISCUSSION GROUP, Oct. 27, 2009 (4th Tuesday), 6:45 p.m., Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Ray McLaughlin will discuss "Wine"—A system which allows Windows programs to run on Linux

Nov 8—SEMCO Sunday

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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

SEMCO Meetings at Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield MI 48076



From I-696 exit at Evergreen. Take Evergreen south to Civic Center Drive. Civic Center Drive is about halfway between I-696/Eleven Mile Rd. and 10 Mile Rd. Turn west, right if you are coming from the north, onto Civic Center Drive. Follow Civic Center Drive, watching the number signs on the right. When you get to the 20700 sign turn right, north, and follow the drive until you arrive at the southwest corner of the brown building with the Engineering Society of Detroit sign near the top. Turn right, east, and go past the front of the building. When you reach the end of the building, turn left, north and go to the back of the building and turn left, west, again. The parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is in the center of the building. Park in back of building. Enter the rear door. The ESD office is on the fourth floor.



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

SEMCO (future meetings)

October 11

November 8

**FIRST CLASS MAIL
Dated Material**

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