Official Newsletter

SouthEastern Michigan

Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

Volume 35	March 2010	Number 3

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.

All SEMCO correspondence should be addressed to

SEMCO - P.O. Box 707 - Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707
Web site: **http://www.semco.org**
E-mail: **semco@semco.org**
General information: (voice) answering device in Royal Oak **(248) 398-7560**

DATA BUS is published monthly by SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) as its official newsletter. **Mail DATA BUS newsletter copy to: Warner Mach, 1360 N. Hix Rd., Westland, MI 48185; or e-mail: warnermach@gmail.com.** The Editor is responsible for contents and control of the DATA BUS. Materials published herein may be used for non-commercial purposes only, without further permission of SEMCO or the authors, except as noted, providing credit is given to the author and source, i.e. DATA BUS, and issue date. Entire contents copyright © 2010 SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc.

SEMCO does not condone in any way the illegal copying of copyrighted material and will not tolerate such practice at any SEMCO function.

Your mailing label and membership card list the month and year your membership expires. Newsletters will not be sent after the month of expiration. Back issues may not be available. Renew your membership as early as possible.

This publication was created using Adobe InDesign CS2
donated by Adobe Systems, Inc.

Our bank, Washington Mutual, was recently taken over by Chase via the FDIC. Our checking and a small savings account were with them, and a Home Equity Loan of just a few thousand. Although our original purpose for the HEL fell through, we had eventually borrowed a small amount for home improvements. We opened the HEL three years ago and have never been late or missed a payment. We usually pay a substantial amount on the principal as well as the monthly interest, but on a few occasions, we only paid the monthly interest, which you can do on a HEL. Shortly after Chase took over, we received a letter from them with two forms they wanted signed to enable them to get copies of our IRS returns for the last two years. They also demanded that we furnish them proof of our income.

I was appalled at the intensity of their demand and decided to ignore it; after all, our record is unblemished, and our FICO score is over 800 and we weren't asking for more money, so I didn't feel we were doing anything wrong? I expected to hear from them by phone, but instead, the next month brought a letter demanding we pay the loan off and there would be no financial penalty for early payment. I also ignored that one. I guess I could have paid it off, but paying money back to your savings does not always happen as planned, so I'm just continuing to pay on the loan, wondering what their next move will be. Am I some kind of criminal?

They then discontinued our credit line, which really doesn't matter to me. Now they're hitting us with extra fees for each payment, called "back dating fees." I've tried complaining to a couple of state agencies, but neither office has responded. My feeling is beware of dealing with Chase. We're changing our checking to another bank, and since our utilities are automatically withdrawn, we're communicating with them to change bank accounts. The utilities tell me many of their customers are also complaining about Chase.

Interesting Reading

Everyone is interested in Flash Memory technology these days, but few end users really understand what it's all about. Information Week had an interesting article that explains some of how it works along with the shortcomings, and what the future might bring. This article might fill in some blanks, but it's written for IT people so read it carefully. Sorry for the long URL, but some readers dislike tinyurls. They tell me they want to know where they're going when they click a URL. <http://www.informationweek.com/news/storage/systems/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=219501231&queryText=Howard%20Marks>

Another interesting article in IW is about "The Internet of Things"; keeping track of all kinds of things, using RFID tags, and other types of information tags. It covers different topics and problems not covered in the RFID article I gave you recently, and might give you something to think about. <http://analytics.informationweek.com/abstract/25/1343/Virtualization/monitoring-technology-creates-internet-of-things.html>.

Oops, Nobody Home

In my November DealsGuy column, I wrote about an interesting 3D address book with a discount. Two of my readers have told me they tried to order it, but were unable to do so, or even get a response to e-mail. We both tried to contact the PR person that I coordinated it with, but to no avail. They don't seem to respond at all and I have no idea why. I have that problem a lot with vendors who send out announcements for a new product, but when that happens I don't usually use that item, but in this case, I had several communications with the person and she assured me everything would work fine. I guess those things happen, but I can't help but feel bad. I'm still trying to contact them.

Need To Uninstall Something?

Mike Ungerman <http://musings-from-mike.blogspot.com> (interesting site) of Central Florida Computer Society <http://www.cfcs.org> suggested Revo Uninstaller as his favorite product for program removals <http://www.revouninstaller.com/revo_uninstaller_free_download.html>. User Group members in Florida will remember Mike as the founder of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG). He put his own money on the line in the hopes that FACUG would be a success that first year, and it has been a resounding success ever since, with the help of many other people.

Here is an excerpt from the Revo Web site: "Revo Uninstaller includes; Junk Files Cleaner, Windows Tools, Auto Run Manager, Browsers Cleaner, MS Office Cleaner, Windows Cleaner, Evidence Remover and Unrecoverable Delete tools! You can reach all these tools from the 'Tools' tool bar button of Revo Uninstaller."

Another of Mike's recommendations

Belarc Advisor is a popular product for analyzing your system, but Mike suggests a similar program, System Information for Windows (SIW), that, in his opinion, presents the data in a more manageable format <http://www.gtopala.com/>. Check their Web site to find out about its many features and download the freeware version. This is an impressive program.

Be Warned About Those Nasty Web Sites

Hewie Poplock <http://www.hewie.net> of Central Florida Computer Society alerted his Windows SIG to this valuable utility, <http://linkscanner.avg.com>. Some of the nastiest malware could download unknowingly from innocent looking Web sites, so a timely warning might help. I recently mentioned Site Advisor from McAfee, and Site Hound from FireTrust to warn you about undesirable Web sites. They turn your browser red and warn you about possible malicious code. Also check out LinkScanner from AVG Technologies. They acquired this product a while back, which used to sell for $29.95 before they bought it, but now it's free. It works with Windows 2000, XP, Vista and Windows 7. It's also OK on either 32-bit or 64-bit systems. It's a plug-in for IE-6 or later and also works with Firefox.

Can't Make Up a Web Site For Your Business, Look Into This Announcement!

Talkbiznow will offer a free online storefront with the launch of Webstore, a service that enables businesses, start-ups and charities to create their own micro-Website promoting products on the Internet. "A Webstore, which can be created for free within eight minutes, dramatically cuts the time

4

and costs required to set up a well-designed business website, which often costs users between £10,000 ($16,000) and £20,000 ($32,000) to build." The biggest use of the new service is expected to come from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) who are already turning to Talkbiznow in the current tough economic conditions as a low-cost and technologically efficient way to reach new markets, recruit staff and create partnerships.

Talkbiznow users can design their own Webstore and choose audio and video promotional tools to help ensure that each micro-website is tailor-made to meet their specific business brand. Each Webstore will have its own URL address, available to all Internet users. Visitors to a Webstore can pay for products and services via PayPal, the online payment system. The accessibility of Webstore reflects the philosophy of Martin Warner, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and co-founder of Talkbiznow, who is committed to offering services for free, empowering SMEs with the technological bandwidth to compete with large corporations.

Warner says: "Webstore represents a unique, non-technical experience to market yourself. Talkbiznow members will be able to create their own storefront. Businesses, charities, events and personal profiles will all be reachable outside the network itself. A Webstore will effectively function as an online business card." Webstore users choose between elegant off-the-shelf templates to define their product, service, event or brand; also advertise prices and describe their industry. Browsers will find each micro-website intuitively easy to navigate with a Webstore acting as a portal that lies between an advertisement and a business website. Users will be able to upload videos about themselves, or their business, from their smart phones and upload them to the page."

Talkbiznow enables its users to network, promote, collaborate with each other, and do business online. Services include web conferencing, voice conferencing and file storage facilities. Users can also use the business social network as an online portal to market and advertise services to other users.

For further information on Webstore, call + 44 (0)20 7233 7578, or check the Talkbiznow URL at <http://www.talkbiznow.com>.

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>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.

I frequently get e-mails from readers of this column and listeners of my radio show regarding problems they are having. While I cannot guarantee an effective answer, I can at least try to help them out, or tell them where they can find a solution. Some of the more interesting, or more common questions I will occasionally post here under the premise that if a few of you are having a similar problem, then many others are having a similar problem.

Last Friday I was forwarded an e-mail that had been bouncing around one of the departments at Lamar University about how to download YouTube videos and convert them to a format that can be used in PowerPoint. Some of the faculty have rightly found that there is some useful content on YouTube that is applicable to academic lectures, and they would like to use this information in class. Fortunately, there are several good solutions.

My personal first choice in downloading YouTube videos and converting them into a format that can play in PowerPoint, or on most video players, is a free add-on for the FireFox browser called DownloadHelper <www.downloadhelper.net>. DownloadHelper is extremely popular with FireFox users, having been downloaded and installed about 54 million times! DownloadHelper places a small icon on the bottom edge of the browser window consisting of three colored balls; when the balls become animated, the DownloadHelper menu becomes available by clicking on the icon. Left clicking on the icon shows the title of the video, and clicking the title downloads the video in YouTube's native FLV format to your computer. Right clicking on the icon opens the menu which allows the user to convert the video into any of many popular formats. Alternatively, clicking on the three-ball icon that appears to the left of the video title at the top of the screen opens a one-click menu that offers all of the options. The one that I use most often is the "Download and Convert" which can download and convert the video in a single action. For compatibility purposes, especially when embedding the video in PowerPoint, I mostly select the WMV (Windows media format), but sometimes choose the QuickTime MOV, or AVI formats. For those who do not have FireFox installed, it is available free at getfirefox.com, and does not interfere with any other browser on the computer.

For those using any browser, there are several free online services that will download YouTube (and other) videos to your computer, and some will also convert them to popular formats for you. Even though its server is frequently busy and located in Brazil, I like Forinside, at <http://www.forinside.com>. Forinside is extremely easy to use; all the user needs to do is copy the URL (web address) of the video and paste it into the textbox, and use the pull down menu to select a format. Clicking the download button will start the process. Forinside can convert online videos into any of the 10 most widely used formats, and can download videos and audio from YouTube, MySpace, Google Video, and Mp3Tube. For those who already have videos on their computers that they would like to convert into other formats, Forinside offers that service for

free. Simply click on the orange "File" tab, then "Browse" your hard drive for the file you want converted. Use the pull down menu to select any of the 10 formats available, click on "Convert" and Forinside will upload the original video to its server, convert it to the chosen format, and then download it to your computer in the new format. Your original video remains intact on your computer. As stated above, the Forinside server is often very busy.

Another service that can download YouTube videos directly to your computer is <http://Download-YouTube.com>. This site is very easy to use from any browser. Simply open the desired YouTube page, and in the address bar of your browser insert the phrase "download-" (download hyphen) before the word "YouTube " in the URL, and the user will be directed to the Download-YouTube web page. On the Download-YouTube page either click on the "Click here to download" link, or right click and "Save Link As" or "Save target as" and the file will be downloaded in the native YouTube FLV format.

One of the easiest free YouTube downloaders is Orbit Downloader, available at <http://www.orbitdownloader.com>. This download tool has some of the highest editor and user ratings on the popular download sites, and can accelerate downloading of not just YouTube videos, but most general downloads as well. Orbit Downloader integrates seamlessly into Internet Explorer, FireFox, and Opera, and includes a "Get It" button that appears when connecting to YouTube that offers a single click download. YouTube videos will be downloaded in their native FLV format.

There is a free bundle of video software that can download YouTube and other media, convert them to most formats, and even edit video and audio files. The software bundle aptly named "Free Studio" contains 23 video and audio utilities, and is a 30-Meg download available for free download from <http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm>. According to the publisher of Free Studio, "With this free software you can convert video and audio files between different formats and to iPod, PSP, iPhone, BlackBerry and other portable devices; burn and rip DVDs and audio CDs; upload and download videos and music to your computer, iPod, PSP, iPhone and BlackBerry; perform basic editing of audio and video files." This bundle, reviewed and top rated by several of the major download sites, may be a worthwhile bundle to download and install.

If there is a need to convert the YouTube FLV videos, or any other video formats, into a more useful format, such as WMV or MOV, a utility called "Any Video Converter Freeware" may be useful, as it supports dozens of video and audio formats, and can easily convert files between these formats. This software is available for download from <http://www.any-video-converter.com/products/for_video_free>, and according to its publisher, has been downloaded over 25 million times. The online service CNet gave Any Video Converter Freeware its highest 5-star editors' rating. If your only need is to play downloaded YouTube videos, there is an easy and free solution that does not require any conversion utilities. YouTube's FLV format can be played on the universal video player (free)

VideoLAN - VLC Media Player <http://www.videolan.org>. The VLC media player is one of the most widely used video players in the world, with over 110 million downloads, and has earned a very loyal following. VLC media Player can play almost every available video and audio format without the need for any plug-ins or add-ons, and is available for free, and will run on almost every operating system.

With these utilities and services, downloading YouTube and other videos and converting them into another useful format is simple. I routinely use such downloads in class both as individual videos, and as videos embedded in PowerPoint. There is much that can be done with online videos, and these utilities and services are worthy of a try.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.forinside.com> – Online download and conversion.

<http://www.downloadhelper.net> – FireFox Add-on and converter.

<http://www.orbitdownloader.com> – Automated downloader.

<http://www.download-youtube.com> – Online download.

<http://www.videolan.org> – Free universal video player.

<http://www.any-video-converter.com/products/for_video_free/>.

<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm>.

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>.

**Edit Your Videos
for Free
By Ira Wilsker**

Since the advent of digital film, it seems that almost all of us now have a digital movie camera of some sort. My two year old cell phone, which is not a technical marvel when compared to what is available today, has a simple video camera. Every section of every class that I am teaching this semester is video recorded, allowing my students to review precisely what we covered in class. There are now decent digital video cameras that are not much larger than a deck of cards, and are often advertised for less than $100. It seems that almost nothing happens now that someone is not video recording. Once recorded, we often have hours of digital video that are in sore need of editing in order to make the video more appealing to viewers. Our videos may be used for strictly private home use or show up on YouTube where there may be countless viewers. The big box stores have several, often expensive, utilities that can be used for video editing, but as is common in the software industry, there are also some very functional free video editors available.

One of the most widely used free video editors is Microsoft's Movie Maker, a part of the Windows Live service, available for download from <http://download.live.com/moviemaker>. Movie Maker will run on Vista or Windows 7. While most Windows Live utilities will run on XP, Microsoft says, "Windows Live Movie Maker is not available for Windows XP or earlier versions of Windows." Movie Maker incorporates a tool-box of

intuitive and easy to use tools that can edit video, incorporate music, add titles, and incorporate special effects. Using the integral AutoMovie feature, the software will invoke a wizard to add a title, display credits, and add transitions and special effects, resulting in a file that is ready to show or upload to services such as YouTube. Movie Maker can also utilize still images to create animated slide shows complete with music, transitions, and effects, with the output looking much like a video. The output of Movie Maker can be saved to the hard drive or other digital media, or burned to a CD or DVD disc. Since it is free and widely used, Microsoft's Movie Maker may be a worthwhile video editing utility to try first.

Recently, I wrote about one of my favorite websites, Gizmo's Freeware Reviews <http://www.techsupportalert.com>, which reviews and rates free software. On its recently updated ratings of the best free video editing software <http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-video-editor.htm>, Gizmo gave his highest rating to the French freeware video editor Avidemux, version 2.5.2, available for direct download from <http://fixounet.free.fr/avidemux>. Gizmo summarized Avidemux with the statement that it is, "Powerful, Easy to use (and has) Well documented tutorials. As with any other video editing program, it can be confusing." While originally written for Linux based computers, Avidemux has been rewritten to also run on BSD, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows under the GNU GPL license. The Windows version will run on both 32 and 64-bit versions of Windows. According to its home page at fixounet.free.fr/avidemux, "Avidemux is a free video editor designed for simple cutting, filtering and encoding tasks. It supports many file types, including AVI, DVD compatible MPEG files, MP4 and ASF, using a variety of codecs. Tasks can be automated using projects, job queue and powerful scripting capabilities." I downloaded Avidemux (Windows version, 12.5 mb), and it installed smoothly and quickly. I tried some of the simple editing tasks in its "Video Filter Manager," and they appeared to work smoothly. While I am no expert at video editing, I was able to perform the listed tasks including cropping and color corrections, and Avidemux worked very well. For someone with some sense of graphics and artistic talent, Avidemux would be an excellent choice.

Since I lack a lot of artistic skills, I like simplicity when it comes to graphics software, and that is why I have been a long-time user of the free VideoSpin video editor published by Pinnacle Software. Available from <http://www.videospin.com>, the software is a large 162mb download. VideoSpin is one of the simplest video editors to use, based on my own experiences. While lacking some of the more advanced features of more sophisticated (and expensive) video editing software, VideoSpin is reasonably feature rich with a very simple front end interface that makes video editing a simple process. For those who try this free version of VideoSpin and like it, but want additional features, there is a commercial version available. The newly released version 2.01, in addition to the traditional video formats, now also supports QuickTime and 3GP video formats. One interesting feature of the new version of VideoSpin is the ability to save videos in a higher quality and widescreen format, compatible with YouTube's newest standards.

Users can also directly upload their output directly to YouTube. VideoSpin has an enormous and loyal following that have created countless videos for a multitude of purposes. One reason for its wide use and popularity are the tutorial videos, some made by users, that clearly demonstrates how to create, edit, and distribute videos using VideoSpin. These tutorials can be viewed by clicking on the "How To" link on the menu bar at the top of the VideoSpin webpage. For those who need additional help, VideoSpin has a very active "Community" which includes a number of forums where users can post questions or request help, with a response likely in a short period of time. VideoSpin will run on almost any contemporary PC with a Pentium or AMD processor with a speed of at least 1.4 GHz, but faster chips are recommended. XP users should have at least 512 MB of RAM, and Vista users need at least 1 gB in order for VideoSpin to run. Since editing video files is graphically intensive, a video card that is DirectX 9 (or higher) compatible, and has at least 64 mb of video RAM is required; almost all video cards manufactured in the past several years would meet that standard. Being a large program, 150 MB of available hard drive space is required to install the software, and much more space may be necessary to store video files. VideoSpin was the very first video editing software I ever used, and still use it. For the user who wants an easy to use free video editor, VideoSpin would be an excellent choice.

Any of the above free video editors will serve the typical home user well, and each would be worthwhile to download and try. With any of these three free utilities, there is no reason not to have well edited and interesting videos.

WEBSITES:
<http://download.live.com/moviemaker>.
<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-video-editor.htm>.
<http://www.avidemux.org>.
<http://fixounet.free.fr/avidemux/>.
<http://www.videospin.com>.

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

The Best Free Software According to Gizmo By Ira Wilsker

In these tough economic times, many of us are finding it difficult to afford new software for our computers. Locally and on line we can shop and sometimes find some deals on software, but if money is especially tight, some of us would choose to do without. Alternatively, there has always been a huge assortment of free software or "freeware" available that can adequately accomplish almost all computing tasks. While there are some mega-sites such as download.com and tucows.com that each carry thousands of software titles, many of which are freeware, there are also some lesser known websites that provide comprehensive information and reviews about freeware. One recent find that has now become one of my favorites is Gizmo's Freeware Reviews, at <http://techsupportalert.com>.

Upon accessing the Gizmo website, the user is greeted with a graphical menu containing 20 categories of software, including cleanup, educational, games, Linux, security, programming, security, system tools, and a dozen others. In addition to free software, Gizmo offers additional categories of information in its navigation window on the left side of the main page. These additional categories include the Best Tech Websites, How-to Guides and Tutorials, Freeware Updates, Security Advice Wizard, and Video Tutorials, as well as some housekeeping functions.

Since I am very concerned about cyber security, I chose to open the Security link from the front page graphical menu, one of the 20 possible selections. I was greeted with a listing of about two dozen Gizmo articles on security software and related topics. Ranked in order of number of hits, and indication of the popularity of each topic, the first security article is "Best Free Antivirus Software," which has had nearly 1.4 million hits. Opening the antivirus article, the user is greeted with a non-technical explanation of antivirus software, followed by a discussion of what Gizmo has determined as the best of the many free antivirus utilities. Gizmo awarded Avira AntiVir Personal Edition its top pick, narrowly beating out Microsoft Security Essentials, which is actually Gizmo's personal choice. Each review is hyperlinked to a section farther down on the webpage, called the "Quick Selection Guide" which summarizes the pros and cons of each recommended product, download links, file size, latest version, 32 and 64-bit compatibility, installation tips, a discussion forum, and online help. The other recommended antivirus products are Avast!, and a-squared Free.

For those who might need help in deciding which security products would be most appropriate for their personal circumstances, Gizmo offers a "Security Advice Wizard" at <http://techsupportalert.com/secwiz> where the user selects his operating system, and answers some simple questions about Internet habits and personal computer skills. Upon completing the wizard, Gizmo makes a recommendation of an antivirus product and a firewall. I tried the wizard using a variety of operating systems and levels of experience, and the wizard arrived at reasonable recommendations for each. The user who follows the wizard's recommendations will likely be well served by its picks.

In addition to having information and reviews on software products, Gizmo also offers a wide selection of other helpful services and information. One that I found exceptionally useful and interesting was a listing of PowerPoint slides and presentations, under the heading "Easily Find PowerPoint Slides and Presentations Using This Site" at <http://techsupportalert.com/content/easily-find-powerpoint-slides-and-presentations-using-site.htm>. I do a lot of PowerPoint presentations in a variety of settings and to different audiences, and often have some difficulties coming up with material. Gizmo may be of great help locating material, and one such resource linked on Gizmo is Slidefinder, at <http://www.slidefinder.net>. Available in 23 languages, Slidefinder has proven to be an outstanding resource, capable of locating individual slides and complete presentations on thousands of topics.

One of the most frequent PowerPoint presentations that I do is on identity theft; entering the term "identity theft" in the search box displayed Slidefinder's limit of 1000 items. Scrolling over the displayed slides (20 per page), opens a larger image of the selected slide and also displays any notes integrated with the slide. A link to the full PowerPoint file is also displayed, and a simple right-click on the file name and selecting "Save Link As" will download the complete file. The primary source of the PowerPoint slides and files are hundreds of universities from all over the globe, as well as government agencies, organizations, trade associations, and other sources.

Another very beneficial section of the Gizmo website is the "Hot Finds" at <http://techsupportalert.com/view/hot>. This selection displays software deals, mostly free, offered by the commercial software publishers for a limited time. As I type this, some of the commercial software being offered for free includes PC performance enhancing utilities, anti-malware utilities, backup utilities, graphics editors, and many others. Frequently checking this list may provide the user with an occasional gem of commercial software either for free, or at a ridiculous low price, such as a recent offer (now expired) for a top rated $30 anti-malware product available for the paltry sum of 99 cents (I purchased 6 copies).

Many users sometimes need some help with accomplishing some computer tasks, or may even find some tasks that may need to be performed that they may have been unaware of. Gizmo has a "How-to Guides and Tutorials" section at <http://www.techsupportalert. com/tutorials>, with over 50 topics listed. The most widely used tutorial "How to Make Vista Run Faster" has been viewed over 300 thousand times. Other tutorials cover different browsers, backing up critical files, improving performance, creating a bootable rescue CD, how to reduce spam, and many other helpful and useful subjects. The Gizmo tutorials are presented in a readable non-technical fashion that is easy to follow and implement,

Gizmo has a wealth of information available, including free software that has been reviewed and evaluated, as well as tutorials and other valuable information. I subscribed to both the RSS feed and e-mail alerts so I can always be promptly informed of any new articles and software added to Gizmo. Stop by <http://www.techsupportalert. com> and see what treasures that you might find.

WEBSITES:

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

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/ secwiz>.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/pc/ security-tools.html>.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/ content/easily-find-powerpoint-slides-and-presentations-using-site.htm>.

<http://www.slidefinder.net>.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/ view/hot>.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/ tutorials>.

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>.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address below).

Do I Need Or Want to Have a Blog? Now, for many, the first question is "what on earth is a blog?" and, "why would I want one?" The origin of the actual word 'blog' comes from the definition of what it really is – a web log – which then became shortened to 'blog.'

People are using blogs for many varied purposes. Some use them like a personal diary, as though the world is truly fascinated by the minutiae of their daily lives (though in the case of celebs, that may be the case). Others, for sharing their knowledge of a particular subject which doesn't necessarily lend itself to publishing a book; and still reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest. In many instances now, professional reporters, whether radio, TV or in print, are writing blogs as well as their regular reporting functions. Others, for reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest.

There are two advantages of using blogs over publishing in the more traditional ways – first, they can be interactive, allowing the readers to make comments, add to the information or contradict the writer; and, second, as mentioned, the ability to update immediately with new or additional information.

My purpose in starting a blog at the end of June was prompted by an article in the Family Chronicle which pointed out how, by publishing a family history book, relations that you'd never known or connected with would suddenly contact you.

This struck a chord with me as I was in the midst of planning a family history book and wanted to connect with others researching this same family. Obviously, publishing a book wasn't the answer for my particular situation.

After some thought on this, I decided to investigate what was involved in creating a blog, thinking this might accomplish my purpose. Of course, one can use any of the social media sites such as MySpace, Facebook, etc. as a type of blog. However, I was looking for specific 'blog' sites. Well, typing 'free blog sites' into Google gave me far more results than I could have dreamed of! Fortunately, there were two with which I was somewhat familiar so I opted to check them out first.

I wanted simple and easy to use..... nothing fancy, just the ability to type whatever I wanted to post and have it work. Obviously I was asking a lot for anything connected with technology right? Actually, wrong. I was able to set up the blog, type out my first posting and have it online within an hour!

You want a site that gives clear, easy to understand directions and allows you to have some choices on the appearance or theme of your blog. Also, if you want some interaction with your readers, make it easy for them to add their comments. The site I chose definitely qualified under these points; much more so than the second site I checked out. I also checked out a few that I wasn't as familiar with and

found that my first choice was still the best for my purpose. The two choices I initially checked out were Google's Blogspot and Wordpress. They can be found at <http://www.blogspot.com> and <http://www.wordpress.com>; however, be sure to check out some of the others as well.

Should you decide to start a blog, there is one caveat I'd both read about as well as heard about from others – don't start posting, and collecting followers of the site, only to lose interest, and just stop posting, or become very erratic in your postings. When first starting my blog, I hoped to post about three times a week, with no less than once a week. In the nine weeks since I started, I've made 18 posts so have averaged two per week, even though I had a couple of weeks when I didn't make any posts due to the death of my mother.

Now, was posting my blog successful in my original purpose? So far, yes. I've heard from a couple of researchers with whom I'd lost contact a number of years ago, plus another couple of whom I'd never heard, so I certainly accomplished that part of my goal. Another bonus is the information I'm gaining from those connections that I might not have otherwise found. Should you wish to take a look at my blog, here's the address: <http://www.mcilmoylfamna.blogspot.com>. If you decide that having a blog is something you'd like to do, I wish you well, and have fun with it! For tips on 'how to blog' just type 'blog tutorial' into a search engine and you'll find lots of choices.

Joan McIlmoyl Cleghorn is a member of Big Blue and Cousins, Canada. Web: <http://www.bbcc.org>. E-mail: <joansjoy (at) gmail.com>.

**Password Protect Your Account
By Kathy Frey**

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address below).

If you password protect your account for your Windows operating system, then you should create a password reset disk. It takes very little time and is easy to do. In Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7, these first steps are the same.
1. Click Start
2. Click Control Panel
3. Click User Accounts

After you have the User Accounts window open, select the account for which you want to make the password reset disk. (Make a reset disk for each account.)

In Windows XP, on the left under Related Tasks, click on Prevent a forgotten password to start the Forgotten Password Wizard, and then click Next. Follow the wizard. You can use either a floppy disk or a USB drive for the reset disk.

In Windows Vista, on the left click on Create a Password reset disk, then follow the wizard. The Password Reset Disk is essentially a small file that can be used to reset your password, even if you have changed your password since creating the reset disk.

·In Windows 7, click on Create a password reset disk. If no media is installed, you will get a message that

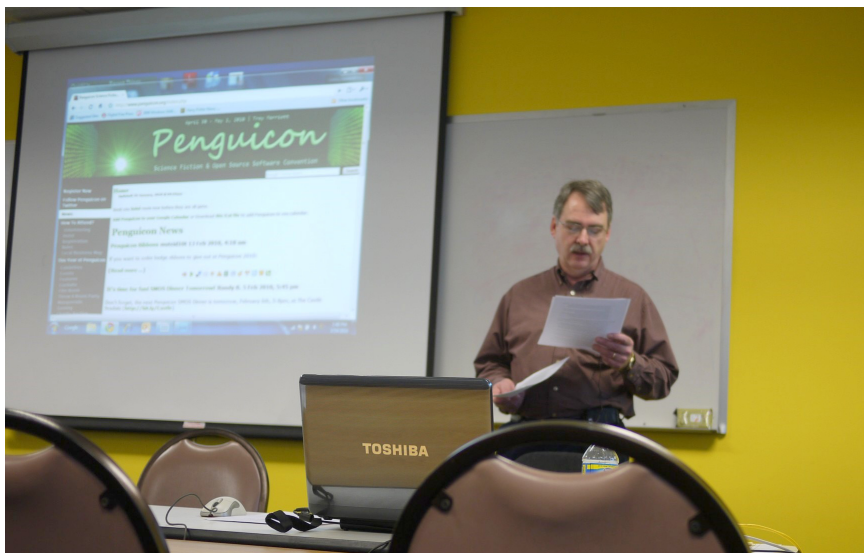# *SEMCO Volunteer Party*

1-24-2010. SEMCO volunteer party at the home of Beth Fordyce.

(Above): Tom Callow discusses computer graphics. (Below): Members at the break period.

SEMCO Meeting Pictures

(Above): Paul DeAthos introduces the speakers for the SIG-IBM Intermediate meeting. (Below): Caroline Landrum, Cindy Landrum, and Bill Landrum discuss social networking.

Board Members Present
Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at Large Bob Clyne and Ronald Green. Also present were Chuck Moery and Raymond McLaughlin. The Feb. board meeting was called to order by Richard Jackson at 12:15 p.m.

Old Business
Bette Gay reported that the February 2010 Current Treasury amount equaled a total of $5,116.06 in the Checking Account and $4,736.63 is invested in three Certificates of Deposit and a January CD Interest Income of $3.27 for an overall total of $9,855.96. The membership currently is 77. There is one honorary member and 5 complementary mailings for a total of 83 newsletters mailed. It is time for Mike Bader, Robert Gawecki, Gary Grzebienik, and Raymond McLaughlin to renew their memberships.

New Business
Bob Clyne passed out the "SEMCO 2001 to 2008 REVIEW and PRELIMINARY 2010 Budget" sheet to the attending Board members for possible editing of the 2010 Budget.

Bob Clyne moved that the Budget be approved "as presented" and Tom Callow seconded the motion. Ron Green abstained. The motion carried.

Bob Clyne moved that Robert Clyne, Jerry Comptois, Stephen Cook, Roland Maki and Morton Stockler be appointed to the Audit Committee. Tom Callow seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ron Green abstaining.

Richard Jackson requested a review of a possible donation of Institutional Instruction Material consisting of Videotapes, DVD's, and various Install Programs for use in a SEMCO Library for member use. Tom Callow remarked that the material might create License and/or copyright violations, and suggested that the request be declined. Bette Gay moved that the donation be declined with SEMCO's thanks and Bob Clyne seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Bob Clyne passed around SEMCO ribbons for review by attending Board members. The ribbons will be used for the forthcoming Penguicon 7.0 2010 (Linux and Science Fiction) Convention that will be held at the Troy Marriott Hotel, 200 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy, Michigan on April 30 through May 2, 2010. Interested individuals can review additional information at <http://www.penguicon.org>.

Richard Jackson reported that several additional podcasts have been edited but not yet posted to the Web site and the Internet Committee has done other updates to the Web site. Bob Clyne noted that numerous updates are still necessary.

Tom Callow moved to adjourn. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion. The motion was carried with Ron Green abstaining. The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

**SIG-IBM
Tom Callow**

March 14: 1:45 p.m. Getting Your Business Into the Light: This is a look at the Microsoft Office Live Small Business Tools for building a free website, e-mail addresses and other items to give a small business an Internet presence. Presentation by Hermine Turner, President of Focus Hope IT User Group. Ms. Turner is credentialled as: BSCS, MCTS, MCT, MCSA, MOS Master and MCAS Instructor, A+, Network+, Linux+.

**SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Paul DeAthos**

March 14: 3:45 p.m. Preparing Your Own Tax Return: "Tax evasion is a crime, but tax avoidance is a civic duty." SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, as guest speaker, will demonstrate how to use your computer to perform your civic duty by using TurboTax to prepare your tax return.

**SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich**

March 22 (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**.**

**SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas**

March 23 (4th Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: General Discussion.

Mar. 2010 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., March 21, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <warnermach@gmail.com>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact Editor (address Page 2)**.**

Warner Mach
warnermach@gmail.com
(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron

Apr. 7, 7 p.m.,(1st Wednesday); Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <compinfo@hughes.net>. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>. (See web site for new meeting location). Topic: "Windows 7."

Focus Hope IT Users Group

Apr. 3, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <http://www.fhitug.org/Meetings/meetings.htm>. Topic (Tentative): "Security - Wired & Unwired'"—pre-registration requested.

HUG (Holly User Group)

Mar. 13. 14, 9:00 a.m.,(2nd Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup- Detroit

Mar. 28, 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: "TBA: Maybe iPad." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

Mar. 20, (3rd Saturday); See web site for meeting time and location. <http://www.mactechnics.org>). JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: "iPhone and iPod Touch. Show Us Your Apps."

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

Mar. 13, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <http://www.mdlug.org>. Topic: TBA.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

Apr. 13, 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

Mar. 11, 7:30 p.m., (2nd Thur.); Westview Office Park, 26100 American Dr., Suite 100, Southfield MI. 48034. Avi Drissman 248-232-7865. Web: <http://www.themichiganapple.com>. Topic: TBA.

Oak Park Computer Club

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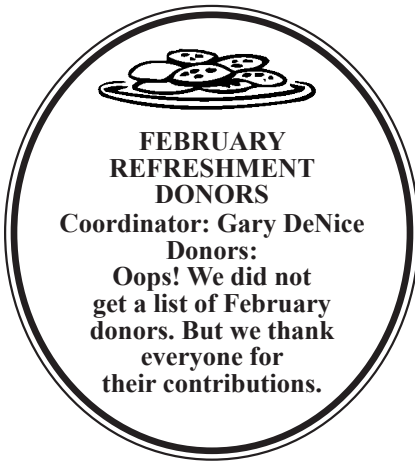
Royal Oak Computer Club

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

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Apr. 6, 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: "Wireless and Other Wonders of Home Networking.".

Continued from Page 14

indicates you need a removable media, such as a floppy disk or a flash drive.

Otherwise the password reset wizard comes up, and you again will need to follow the screens.

After creating your reset disks, store them in a very safe place, since the information can be easily used by anyone to reset the password and gain access to your account.

There are other ways to change the passwords in all three operating systems, but the above is an easy and quick way to have that extra safety net in hand.

Kathy Frey is Webmaster of the Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ. Web: <http://gvcc.apcug.org/>. E-mail: <frey58 (at) cox.net>.

FEBRUARY REFRESHMENT DONORS
Coordinator: Gary DeNice
Donors:
Oops! We did not get a list of February donors. But we thank everyone for their contributions.

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	**MS Office for Windows:** Callow
AutoCAD: Comptois	**MS Word:** Clyne
Genealogy: Cook	**Networking:** Callow
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz	**Novell Netware:** Yuhasz
Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz	**Quicken:** Clyne
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz	**Geocaching:** Cook
Security: Bader	**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@comcast.net
Yuhasz, Steve...Help@yuhasz.org

SEMCO CALENDAR

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

March 14–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. **Getting Your Business Into the Light:** This is a look at the Microsoft Office Live Small Business Tools for building a free website, e-mail addresses and other items to give a small business an Internet presence. Presentation by Hermine Turner, President of Focus Hope IT User Group. Ms. Turner is credentialled as: BSCS, MCTS, MCT, MCSA, MOS Master and MCAS Instructor, A+, Network+, Linux+.

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 p.m. **Preparing Your Own Tax Return:** "Tax evasion is a crime, but tax avoidance is a civic duty." SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, as guest speaker, will demonstrate how to use your computer to perform your civic duty by using TurboTax to prepare your tax return.

SIG-ADVANCED, March 22, 2010 (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.

SIG-LINUX , March 23, 2010 (4th Tuesday), 6:45 p.m., Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: General discussion.

April 11–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.

THE ENGINEERING SOCIETY OF DETROIT®
FOUNDED IN 1895

Affiliate Society

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
March 14
April 11

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