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The Future is Now! **By Warner Mach**

[Editor's Note: At the SEMCO 35th Anniversary Celebration in April four speakers addressed the theme of "The Future is Now!" This is one of the four talks].

I would like to address six examples to show why the "future is now" in the rapidly developing computer world. SEMCO started in 1976. These are some of the reasons why what was science-fiction in 1976 is reality in 2011. Sometimes we are imbedded in the culture and don't see the tremendous changes that have occurred:

- (1) Overcoming limitations: We no longer deal with the limitations such as computer speed, limited memory, and limited external storage.
- (2) Telecommunications: The universal Internet as a solution to the communications problem.
- (3) Virtual Worlds: The world of Second Life and multi-user games.
- (4) The "Watson" supercomputer that beat the human Jeopardy contestants.
- (5) Simulation of brain neurons: Henry Markram and the "Blue Brain" project.
- (6) Seymour Wolfram and a "New Kind of Science."

So imagine, if you will, that you have stepped out of the time machine from 1976.

(1) Overcoming Limitations:

I think that, for people who have been in the computer field since the early days, I only have to remind them of the early limitations:

* **Computer Speed:** When you buy a computer today there is much less talk of CPU speed because, for normal purposes, the computer speed is adequate, even if you get a "netbook." But, early on, we followed chip speed closely. It determined what we could do.

* **Memory:** As I researched some of the early literature I re-remembered some of the concerns in the "old days." A big issue was the 640K memory limitation that was a consequence of 16-bit memory Addressing. This limitation was overcome by elaborate schemes such as "extended memory" and "expanded memory." Also, of course, physical memory was expensive in the early days, so even if we could address it we might have a problem buying it.

* **External Storage:** Some of the early machines used the "paper tape" facility of the Teletype machine to store BASIC programs. Some of the machines used cassette tape recorders to store programs and data. Later there were various sizes of "floppy disks"—8" and 5.25" and 3.5". And, finally, hard drives. There were size limitations on early hard drive storage. Now we can store terabytes of data. Of course with the original Altair, a good computer person would memorize the boot sequence, which was entered by hand. So the human memory would serve as external storage.

* **Size:** Without saying too much about the topic, we should at least note that the size and bulk of the early computers was a problem for portability. Now we are down to netbooks and tablets and smartphones. Size reduction, in itself, makes new things possible.

* **Operating System:** You can now choose between Windows, Linux, and Mac OS as your operating system of

choice. There are clear partisans for each of these systems, but certainly any one of them are a great improvement over a BASIC-based operating system using the command line as input.

So these are some of the concerns with which we no longer deal.

(2) Telecommunications

A very major advancement was the development of the Internet and the use of the Internet browser.

I really think that perhaps no one would have anticipated, in 1976, how this has developed. Our science-fiction dreams in the 70's and 80's revolved around faster modem speeds over landline telephones; not a ubiquitous network using WiFi, and now the use of a "browser."

In the early days we used the "bulletin board system." I know that Bob Clyne had an elaborate system in Royal Oak and I ran a second phone line to the house and had a small BBS.

The big problem with the BBS system was long-distance phone charges to go to a popular spot. In order to partially overcome this the "Fido" system was developed that would store messages and data and forward them at night when phone rates were lower.

In addition to the Internet itself, which got away from the landline-based system, there is the vast improvement in transmission speeds, which makes possible graphics and video in addition to text.

(3) Virtual Worlds

I am active in "Second Life." I send my avatar, Warner Magneto, out to meet with people from all over the world in a virtual environment.

Even more popular than Second Life are the various multi-user games that let folks vent their aggression on

friends and strangers. Games are a study in themselves, but to be in one of these virtual worlds seems to be a very real experience. People seem to easily adapt to a virtual existence.

Certainly entering a virtual world is a science-fiction experience. Although my pixilated avatar is interacting with your pixilated avatar, at the far end there are real people.

Things in the Early Stages

As you emerge from the 1976 time machine, I would like to tell you about a few computer-related things that are current, but are in the early stages; so the final consequences are not yet apparent:

(4) Watson

We should mention that this year is SEMCO's 35th anniversary and it is IBM's 100th anniversary.

Full disclosure: I spent my career working with IBM mainframes and I own IBM stock.

In spite of predictions, a few years ago, of IBM's demise, the company continues to adapt and thrive, and recently showed off the "Watson" supercomputer which beat the top human "Jeopardy" contestant at that game.

The significance was less in the winning of the game than in demonstrating that the computer could deal with complicated language input and could at least give the appearance of "understanding" in order to sift through vast amounts of data to come up with answers.

The problem that computer scientists are now addressing is that there is too much "data" and not enough "information." Microsoft has highlighted this fact in their ads for the "Bing" search engine. These ads show

folks going off in wild information tangents when a simple question is asked. In these ads they seem to be saying that Google is, in effect, too good.

IBM is now in partnership with universities and companies in efforts to turn huge amounts of data in engineering and physics and medicine into useful information. Perhaps at some point we, as individuals, will be able to reach into the “cloud” and take advantage of this.

Things in the Early Stages and Possibly Controversial

(5) Blue Brain

I recommend that you look at the TED lecture given by Henry Markram, Director of the Blue Brain project. The Blue Brain project is, as you might guess, a simulation run on an IBM super computer. This group is attempting to simulate the neurons in the human brain and is actually addressing the old philosophical question of how much of “reality” is out there in the world and how much is generated by the brain.

Dr. Markram maintains that over 90% of our perceptions are generated by the brain and that we travel in a “reality bubble” that is created by the brain.

The real nature of real reality is what physics and science is all about, so who knows what may emerge from this study(?).

(6) Seymour Wolfram

Seymour Wolfram is the man behind the “Mathematica” software that is widely used in Universities. He is also behind the “Wolfram Alpha” search engine.

Dr. Wolfram is unquestionably a genius, and a few years ago he wrote a book titled, “A New Kind of Science.”

The theme of the book is that what science should concern itself with

is algorithms rather than equations; that the universe itself is driven by an algorithm of some sort. The way that you demonstrate your understanding of reality is that you start with simple elements and an appropriate algorithm and demonstrate that your conception matches real phenomenon in the world.

Conclusions:

Just a quick word about money and computers: Some of the motivation behind computer development has been making a lot of money and some of the motivation has been an exploration of “what is possible.” Sometimes these two things work together and sometimes they do not. The “dot com” bubble was an example of a capital implosion. But the exploration of “what is possible” goes on—As with the social networks and the development of smartphones, etc. I think that computer clubs, like SEMCO, are driven by the exploration of “what is possible.”

Here we are in 2011. In some respects we see that computers have produced amazing results, but there are some down sides. Some possible down sides are more devastating weapons, increased surveillance, and runaway stock markets.

Whether history says that the net result is good or bad is yet to be determined but, in any case, they have made things a good deal more interesting.

References:

(1) The Computer History Museum is the place to learn about early computer history:

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

(2) Retro computing: Buy a new-old Commodore-64 and other legacy emulated machines:

<<http://www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2011/04/commodore-64-goes-on-sale-amiga-vic-20-coming-soon/>>

<http://www.commodoreusa.net/CUSA_C64Select.aspx>

<<http://www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2009/04/ben-heck-goes-b/>>

(3) The following Wikipedia articles talk about DOS memory issues:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expanded_memory>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extended_memory>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DOS_memory_management>

(4) To become part of Second Life, go here:

<<http://secondlife.com/>>

(5) The Henry Markam TED talk (video) is here:

<http://www.ted.com/talks/henry_markam_supercomputing_the_brain_s_secrets.html>

(6) To read the giant “New Kind of Science” book go here:

<<http://www.wolframscience.com/nksonline/toc.html>>

(7) Seymour Wolfram explains “New Kind of Science” in this video:

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC14GonZnU>>

(8) This talk on Dropbox at:

<<http://www.tinyurl.com/FIN001>>

(9) Slide show featuring Second Life:

<<http://www.tinyurl.com/FIN002>>



**AZIO Wireless
Keyboard & Mouse
Review
By Franz Breidenich**

The Azio KB531RM wireless keyboard and mouse combo uses a 2.4 GHz radio signal to communicate with the computer. The Quick Installation Guide that I received with the unit did not even tell where to find the USB receiver, so I downloaded a Quick Installation Guide from the AZIO Corporation web site <<http://www.aziocorp.com/>>. That guide was much better. The receiver is quite tiny and is stored in the battery compartment on the bottom of the mouse. I found it a bit difficult to remove the receiver from its compartment in the mouse due to its small size and tight fit in the mouse compartment.

The new guide instructs you to connect the receiver to the computer, make sure the included batteries are installed correctly in the keyboard (2 x AAA) and mouse (1 x AA), turn the mouse on and then press the connect button on the underside of the keyboard. The keyboard worked as soon as the receiver was inserted into the USB port, but the mouse would not work until I rebooted the computer. The hardware will run on Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7, both 32-bit and 64-bit.

The keyboard is thin, 10mm, but standard sized with 110 keys. There are four multimedia hot keys. These hot keys will put the computer to sleep, adjust volume up or down, or mute the volume. There is also a key to bring up your default web browser. The keys are Chiclet style with a rubber membrane type switch as is found on some laptop computers. The mouse is smaller than the mice found on most desktop

computers. It has the standard right and left buttons, a center scroll wheel, and a DPI sensitivity adjustment button. Located on the under side of the mouse is an on and off switch.

Azio says the keyboard will work up to 30 feet from the receiver. I tried the keyboard 15 feet from the receiver and it worked flawlessly. Therefore, I could put my laptop by the television set; connect the output of the computer to the television and work on the keyboard from my easy chair.

I did not use my computer for several days, and when I restarted the computer, I had a repeat of the problem with the mouse. The keyboard worked right away, but the mouse would not work until I rebooted the computer. After turning off the computer and restarting it again, the keyboard and mouse worked OK. I don't know if this problem is unique to my computer or is generic.

This morning when started my computer I turned on the mouse before I turned on the computer and this seems to have solved the problem. After further testing, it appears that the sequence of turning on the mouse before turning on the computer is the solution to the problem.

The keyboard and mouse allow me to do everything I could do with the keyboard on the laptop computer except for the special functions performed by the function keys on the laptop, like turning the wireless connections on or off. The multimedia hotkeys do some of the functions done by the function keys on the laptop, such as, adjusting volume, or muting the sound. This keyboard and mouse combination is a perfect solution for using a computer remotely within 30 feet. As soon as I get an HDMI cable to

connect my laptop computer to my flat panel television, I will be computing from my easy chair.



**Browser Wars
Intensify With Release of
IE9, Firefox 4—Part 1
By Ira Wilsker**

I have made it no secret that Microsoft's Internet Explorer has not been my favorite browser. While it is integrated at the system level with all recent versions of Windows (except in Europe), Internet Explorer (IE) has had a reputation for being slow, bloated, insecure, and lacking many of the enhanced and improved features of its feisty competitors, such as Firefox, Google's Chrome, Apple's Safari (Windows version), and Opera. In the early 1990's, when the World Wide Web was in its infancy, a university developed browser known as Mosaic had a near monopoly, with Netscape appearing as a potential competitor. Not to be left out in the cold, Microsoft decided to get into the browser business in 1995 with its Internet Explorer utilizing code licensed from Mosaic, and included with OEM versions of Windows 95, and Microsoft Plus! for Windows 95. Mosaic, which I personally used for several years, was phased out as Internet Explorer and Netscape fought it out for consumer acceptance and dominance in the browser market.

Netscape had some success becoming the dominant browser in terms of market share in the late 1990's, and then declined as Microsoft encouraged computer stores and Internet service providers (ISPs) to give away countless copies of IE, while Netscape depended on sales revenue in order to survive. This behavior by Microsoft

resulted in a successful antitrust suit by Netscape against Microsoft, but the decision was too late to save Netscape. It was very difficult for the commercial product Netscape, produced by the Netscape Communications Corporation, to compete against the well-financed Internet Explorer being given away for free by Microsoft. AOL purchased Netscape, but did not actively pursue its development, discontinuing it in 2007, and releasing its last security patch in 2008 (source: Wikipedia). In 1998, Netscape released most of the code base for Netscape Communicator under an open source license, meaning that anyone could develop software based on the open source code. Mozilla was a code name used by Netscape for its Netscape Communicator software in development, and that code became the basis for the now popular Firefox browser, which owes its birth to that early Mozilla code.

Now in the spring of 2011, the browser wars continue with the almost concurrent releases of Internet Explorer 9, Firefox 4, and Google's Chrome 10. Despite the clout of the powerhouse Microsoft, the alternative browsers are reducing the market share of IE. According to a recent article in USA Today (March 16, 2011 edition), citing a report by Net Applications, Internet Explorer's market share has dropped to 57% of the browser market, with Firefox a distant second with 22%. Chrome, being heavily promoted by the giant Google and its vocal group of users is third at 11%, followed by Apple's Safari with 6%, and the feisty European product, Opera, taking 2% of the browser market. While there are some lesser known browsers in use, some of which are technically excellent,

these five browsers make up about 98% of the market.

Internet Explorer 9 is now being heavily promoted by Microsoft as the browser of choice optimized for Windows 7, but also runs well on Vista (not all enhanced IE9 features will work on Vista). Both 32- and 64-bit versions are available for free download from Microsoft <<http://microsoft.com/ie>>. Sadly, Internet Explorer 9 will not run on Windows XP, and unless there is a change of heart at Microsoft, IE 8 will be the last version of Microsoft's browser that will run on the now discontinued Windows XP. According to Microsoft, there are "9 reasons to get Internet Explorer 9." The first reason for upgrading (or switching) to IE9 is speed; according to published results, IE9 is up to six times faster than IE8 because it utilizes hardware acceleration (available in most newer computers) to load and display web pages. IE9 is less cluttered and more visually appealing by minimizing the number of controls, only having the most basic controls displayed in the browser. The new version allows the user to "Pin" his favorite websites to the Windows taskbar, which will directly open (mouse click) the websites without first having to load the browser, speeding their display. The new IE9 has eliminated the separate search box on the toolbar, now combining the search and address bar into a single unit that performs both functions, the search being performed on whatever the user selected as his preferred search engine, with Microsoft's own Bing search engine being the factory default. Combining both functions in a single place saves valuable real estate on the desktop, freeing up more space for web pages. IE was among the last of the

major browsers to incorporate tabbed browsing, and has now redesigned the “New Tab” (CTRL-T is the shortcut) which provides quick access to the most visited websites. Tabs that have been closed can be reopened, including tabs closed in the previous browsing session. With personal privacy becoming a more sensitive and serious Internet issue, IE9 offers something in each tab it calls “InPrivate Browsing.” According to the explanation built into IE9, “InPrivate Browsing helps prevent Internet Explorer from storing data about your browsing session. This includes cookies, temporary Internet files, history, and other data. Toolbars and extensions are disabled by default.”

One complaint that users have had about previous versions of IE was its often long time to load, primarily due to the “add-ons” selected by the user. IE9 now incorporates an “Add-on Performance Advisor” that informs the user about the performance degradation of selected add-ons, and allows the user to selectively disable or uninstall any unnecessary add-ons. Another new feature in IE9 is called “Tracking Protection” which helps protect the user’s privacy by limiting the information that some websites collect without the knowledge of the user. One of the popular add-ons utilized in earlier versions of IE was some form of download manager, because the download manager built into IE lacked the ability to effectively pause and restart downloads. Earlier versions of IE also lacked the ability to check downloaded files for malware or other malicious content at the time of download, a function performed by many of the third-party download managers. In IE9, downloads can be

paused and restarted by the integral download manager, which also notifies the user if the downloaded file could harbor malicious content or other forms of malware.

Another feature built into IE9, that is not listed by Microsoft as one of the top reasons for using IE9, but which I found especially beneficial is what IE9 calls “Smartscreen Filter,” a feature that provides protection from a variety of web born threats including anti-phishing protection, phishing being one of the most common methods of identity theft which uses counterfeit websites to trick users into disclosing personal data, typically credit card numbers, bank account numbers, ATM card numbers, PIN numbers, passwords, and other sensitive personal information, and displays the real website address rather than the spoofed web address. Another function of Smartscreen Filter is “Application Reputation” which reduces unnecessary warnings on reputable files that are downloaded, while showing severe warnings for downloads that may have a high degree of risk. The Smartscreen Filter also includes anti-malware protection that helps protect the computer from malware and other malicious software that may enter the computer through the browser. This feature is smart, in that it will either block an entire malicious website, or have a “surgical block” that can block purloined pages on an otherwise legitimate website, without blocking the entire website. Smartscreen Filter is integrated with the download manager previously mentioned, providing some protection from dangerous downloads. Based on the threat level, some downloads may be immediately blocked, while others

will present the user with an appropriate alert giving the user the choice to delete, run, or save the questionable program or file.

Internet Explorer 9 is a very good choice for users of Windows 7, with its enhanced and optimized features that work with Windows 7, as well as its greatly improved performance, safety, and security features. While lacking some of the “bells and whistles” available with Windows 7, Internet Explorer 9 will offer Vista users increased performance and safety as well. Windows XP users cannot use IE9 as it is incompatible with XP, and must continue to use IE8 or an alternative browser, such as Firefox.

Next *[article below]*, in Part 2, I will discuss the features and advantages of the newly released Firefox 4, and compare them to Internet Explorer 9. In a future column I will be evaluating Google’s newly released Chrome 10, and Opera 11. Hold on; the browser wars are heating up as some strong contenders are in the fight.

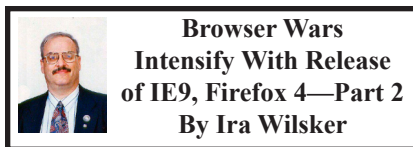
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[<http://www.microsoft.com/ie>.](http://www.microsoft.com/ie)

[<http://www.beautyoftheweb.com>.](http://www.beautyoftheweb.com)

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Last *[article]* I wrote about the newly released Internet Explorer 9 from Microsoft, and how it has increased speed and security over the older versions of Internet Explorer. Despite the fact that it is included with virtually all builds of Windows sold in the United States and most (but not all) other countries, and many users are unaware or unwilling to download and use an alternative browser, it has seen a significant decrease in market share. While it appeared that Internet Explorer had a near monopoly on the browser market for several years, several feisty competitors have appeared, and been met with varying degrees of success in taking market share from Internet Explorer. One of the former strong competitors, Netscape, lost much of its market share, underwent changes in ownership, and was eventually phased out, leaving its open source code for a successor to develop. From this open source code evolved the number two browser in the world, Firefox.

Somewhat akin to the old slogan that Avis used in its epic battle with Hertz, “We’re number two; we try harder!,” Firefox has generally been more innovative than Internet Explorer, generally faster, more feature rich, and more secure than Microsoft’s product, with a quicker upgrade path for bug fixes and security enhancements. Being an open source product, meaning that the program code is readily available, thousands of plug-ins and add-ons have been independently created to increase the usability and security of Firefox,

allowing for an almost infinite ability to customize the browser and improve the browsing experience of the user.

When I downloaded and installed Firefox 4, it seamlessly imported my bookmarks (favorites), history, passwords, cookies, and other information and settings from my Firefox 3.6.15. For those installing Firefox 4 for the first time, the installation offers the user to non-destructively import favorites, cookies, history, passwords, and other settings and information from Internet Explorer, such that Firefox 4 is instantly ready to be used, without the loss of any significant material from Internet Explorer. Users should be aware that Internet Explorer and Firefox (as well as the other browsers such as Opera, Chrome, and Safari) mutually coexist on the computer and desktop without interfering with each other. Each browser asks to be made the default browser, meaning that it will be opened if a web link is clicked, and my personal choice is to have Firefox as my default browser. In no way does this degrade the functionality of the other browsers, as I sometimes use the others for special purposes, but still use Firefox for almost all of my browsing needs.

The first thing I noticed after opening my newly installed Firefox 4 is that the “screen real estate” or space used by web pages seemed larger, because it was indeed larger. Firefox 4 reduced the numbers of buttons and tools on the page (they are still available if needed), and combined the functions of others into a single button that intelligently knows what function to engage. To access what used to be the menus at the top of the pages, simply click on the “Firefox” button in the top left corner, and a comprehensive menu

drops down, reminiscent of the menus available on older versions of Firefox; after use, the menus disappear, leaving a clean appearance. The address bar, now called the “Awesome Bar,” and tabs are thinner (less height), also freeing up space on the desktop. Tabs for open pages are now at the top of the screen by default, but can be quickly moved below the Awesome Bar if desired. These changes at the top of the window create a clean appearance, lacking the clutter of older browsers, freeing up space for web pages. If the user wants to restore the classic menu buttons to their archaic positions at the top of the page, and sacrifice some of the newly available real estate, clicking on the “Firefox” button and then Options - Menu Bar will display the menus where they were on the older versions.

I usually have several tabs (web pages) open at any given time, and sometimes it gets confusing and cluttered when switching between tabs. Firefox 4 offers a feature it calls “Panorama.” With Panorama, commonly used tabs can be combined in single group, making them each readily identifiable and accessible. I created a Panorama for my most commonly used tabs, including my web based e-mail, Facebook, my news page, and my stock quotes. By going to the Panorama, I can instantly see a thumbnail of each of the pages, and open them as desired. Multiple Panoramas can be created for other groups or clusters of often used tabs. The Panorama button is a small, square icon made up of four smaller rectangles, and this will open the Panoramas. Some users have reported that they did not have a Panorama icon, but it is available and can be permanently displayed by clicking on the down arrow on the

right of the tabs, displaying a menu of the open tabs; by clicking on the “Tab Groups,” the Panorama screen will open, and the icon for it will now appear on the browser. Panorama is a powerful tool that can be manipulated and used to manage groups and tabs; a little practice is all that is necessary to master the functions of panorama.

Now that users can access Firefox on multiple platforms and devices, including a new Firefox for mobile phones, a “Sync” function allows the user to securely synchronize passwords, tabs, bookmarks, and other information between browsers. Now, if Firefox 4 is used on multiple computers, tablets, smart phones, and other devices, the user can have material from one device instantly available on any other chosen device, all efficiently coordinated or “Synced.” Clicking on the “Tabs From Other Computers” will display the open tabs from the other synchronized computers.

I tried this on two simultaneous running computers with Sync engaged on both, and was able to get an open tab on one machine to automatically appear on the other machine. Sync also works across different operating systems; since Firefox 4 will run on Windows, Mac, and other operating systems, Sync will effectively connect all of them. To save space and maintain a clean look, buttons have been rearranged, which may take the user a few moments to become familiar with using. The “Home” button will display any stored bookmarks by clicking on the “down arrow,” and the “star” icon will create a new bookmark. Frequently used tabs or bookmarks can be “pinned” on the tab bar, somewhat permanently placing them there (they

are removable), allowing their easy access whenever Firefox is loaded.

One notable improvement in Firefox 4 over its predecessors and some of its major competitors is speed. Firefox 4 loads faster, and displays pages much faster than in the past. In published performance tests, Firefox 4 loaded and displayed web mail, games, and other pages between three and six times faster than the previous Firefox 3.6. One of the several reasons for this improved performance is an improved Java script engine called JägerMonkey, which is faster and more efficient than earlier engines. Another substantial improvement on speed and performance comes from hardware acceleration, which works with Windows 7, Vista, XP, and Max OS X, and takes better advantage of the hardware in the machine to speed the display of games and videos, and other graphic intensive websites.

Browsing privacy is becoming more important to users for safety and security reasons. Firefox 4 offers a “Private Browsing,” which allows the user to surf the net without saving a list of the websites which were visited. Some users prefer to “Clear Recent History” which will delete private data or recent browsing activity, making it difficult for others to see what the user was doing online. Sometimes we visit a website in error, or one that we would prefer to simply forget; the “Forget This Site” feature deletes every trace of having ever visited that website. Many users are oblivious that websites either by themselves, or in collaboration with other websites, track where the user has been for the purpose of creating marketing profiles for sale to advertisers, or other information about

the user; the “Do Not Track” feature informs websites that the user wants to opt-out of any tracking. Fraud of various types is rampant on the Internet; the “Content Security Policy” determines which website content is legitimate, and protects the user from many forms of cross-site scripting attacks. In terms of personal privacy, while Firefox 4 is very good at protecting the user’s privacy, it should be noted that ISP’s and websites typically collect information from the data stream, and a browser cannot definitively control this collection.

One claim that has been made about Firefox in the past is that it has often been more secure than Internet Explorer; Firefox 4 continues this tenaciousness by implementing a series of tough security functions at the browser level. One such feature is “Instant Website ID” which displays a color coded icon directly to the left of the web address in the Awesome Bar (address bar), which indicates the degree of valid identity information available about the listed website. If the icon is gray, that indicates that there is no identity information listed for that website, which may be an indication that the particular website is not trustworthy, and personal information and credit card numbers maybe should not be entered on that site. A blue icon indicates that the website has basic identity information available, and that there may be some form of third party “trust” verification, along with some encryption, but the information has not been independently verified by a credible resource. A green icon means that the website being displayed has posted complete information about it, and has validated its authenticity. Firefox 4 also provides integral protection from phishing (forged websites used to obtain

information for the purpose of identity theft or other financial crimes), and malware (Trojans and spyware) which may be transmitted from a purloined website, by warning the user to avoid that particular website.

Many of us frequently download and install software and other files from the Internet via our browser; this has also become a prominent vector for the transmission of malware. The “Secure Software Installation” feature requires that a secured connection be established prior to the downloading and installation of any software. This feature, along with “AntiVirus Integration,” which integrates the user’s security software with the browser, scans downloads for malware as they are being downloaded, providing an extra level of protection from viruses and other malware.

Browsers incorporate a variety of plug-ins and other add-ons which provide additional functionality to the browser. Common plug-ins include Java, QuickTime, Flash, Adobe Acrobat, and many others. Firefox 4 offers a “Plug-in Check” to display which plug-ins need to be updated, which may result in improved security and performance. Adjacent to each plug-in is a button to automate the update process by automatically downloading the latest plug-ins.

Users of Windows 7 who have young children may implement the parental control features integrated into Windows 7; Firefox 4 seamlessly integrates with the Windows 7 parental controls and can block the children from unapproved web access, downloads, and other Internet functions.

There are many more new or improved features in Firefox 4, which is explicitly why I use it as my default

browser. One minor issue, which Firefox is currently rectifying, is that a few of my third party plug-ins and add-ons from Firefox 3.6.15 were incompatible with Firefox 4 when imported, and thus could not be used. Firefox 4 has a feature which allows the user to report any incompatible plug-ins to the developers who will try to resolve the incompatible items. Most of the few plug-ins I had issues with have been resolved, with only my older version of the RoboForm password manager having some issues with Firefox 4. RoboForm is offering an upgraded version that is optimized for Firefox 4 for a fee (\$20), but the blog threads indicate that Firefox may have a fix in the works.

Rhetorically, one may ask why Firefox earned the number two position in the browser market. The answers are many, as discussed above. Firefox 4 is available for free for almost all operating systems and platforms, including portable and mobile devices. Since they can all be securely synchronized if desired, Firefox 4 can be an excellent choice, even if another browser is already installed. The different versions can all be accessed at mozilla.com. Download it and install it, and you will likely enjoy Firefox 4 as much as I enjoy it.

WEBSITES:

<<http://getfirefox.com>>.
 <<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/new>>.
 <<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/central>>.
 <<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/plugincheck>>.
 <<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/performance>>.
 <<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/security>>.

Ira Wilsker is a 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@sbcglobal.net>.



Of Interest Links (OIL) By Fred Acerri

Can bees color maps better than ants?

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110310093756.htm>>.

Quake shakes Japan's science

<<http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110321/full/471420a.html>>.

New Technique Could Help Solve Mystery of Bees

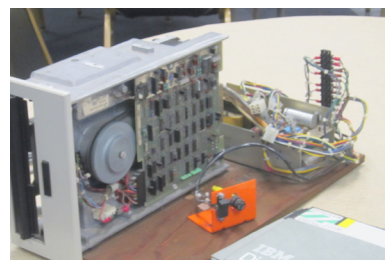
<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110321201649.htm>>.

Quantum Mechanics Braces for the Ultimate Test

<<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/331/6023/1380.short>>.

Adobe fixes critical Flash Player bug affecting Reader

<http://news.cnet.com/8301-27080_3-20045638-245.html?tag=topTechContentWrap:editorPicks>.



8" Floppy Drive – Displayed at 35th anniversary meeting by Bob Clyne.

**Association of PC User
Groups (APCUG) Conference
Announcement**

[Editor's note: We received the following announcement from APCUG. SEMCO members are eligible to attend this conference. See Bob Clyne for car-pooling information].

You are invited to the following event: APCUG 2011 User Group Conference & Annual Meeting Friday, July 15, 2011 at 3:00 PM - to - Sunday, July 17, 2011 at 2:00 PM .

The 2011 APCUG Annual Computer Conference will be held this year at the Crown Plaza Cleveland South in Independence, Ohio.

So if you are looking for a rocking place to go this summer meet us in Cleveland, Ohio the home of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Attend the numerous workshop and educational sessions and socialize with your fellow user group members from around the world.

More info at <<http://bit.ly/gtqpCs>>.

The conference will start with a sign in and registration on Friday night the 15th of July at approximately 3:00 PM EDT and will be followed by a meet and greet in the lounge.

The attendance fee for the conference is \$50. This will cover the Friday night meet and greet, a full day of workshop sessions on Saturday, and a half-day on Sunday.

We have negotiated an excellent room rate. Additionally the rate will apply for 3 days before the conference and 3 days after for those who would like to arrive early or stay over and do some sight seeing.

Hotel on line registration: <http://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=CP&GPC=APG&hotelCode=CLERR&_PMID=99801505> or <<http://tinyurl.com/APCUGC>>.

Crown Plaza Cleveland South
5300 Rockside Rd Independence, Ohio
44131 .

**Selecting an Entire Paragraph
in Word
By Sharon Parq Associates**

If you are using the mouse, Word provides several quick ways to select an entire paragraph. First, you can simply triple-click anywhere within the paragraph. This is perhaps the fastest and most common method of selecting an entire paragraph.

Second, you can move the mouse pointer to the left of the first character in any line of the paragraph you want to select. The mouse pointer turns into an arrow pointing up and right. Double-click the mouse, and the paragraph is selected.

Finally, if you are using the style area, you can also move the mouse pointer into the style area to the left of the paragraph you want to select. Click once on the left mouse button, and the entire paragraph is selected.

If you like to use the keyboard instead of the mouse, you can select the current paragraph by pressing Ctrl+Up Arrow (which moves the insertion point to the beginning of the paragraph) and then pressing Ctrl+Shift+Down Arrow.

Copyright © 2011 by Sharon Parq Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Thousands of free Microsoft Word tips can be found online at <http://word.tips.net>.

SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): Bob Clyne, Warner Mach, Jim Rarus, and Steve Yuhasz talk about the anniversary meeting at WJR radio. (Below) Left: Vice President Richard Jackson conducts the business meeting. Right: Former President Jim Rarus reviews the very early days of SEMCO.



SEMCO Meeting Pictures



The Future is Now! Speakers: (Above): Left: Tom Callow. Right: Warner Mach.
(Below) Left: Steve Yuhasz. Right: Mike Rudas.





BOARD MEETING
4/10/2011
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present

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 Brian Brodsky. Arriving late were Michael Rudas and his wife. The board meeting was called to order at 12:17 p.m.

Old Business

Bette Gay reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of \$9,698.06 with \$4,950.56 in the checking account and \$4,747.50 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership currently is 72. It is time for William Vollmer to renew his membership.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Carol Sanzi \$31.99 for the purchase of refreshment supplies. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bette Gay moved to rescind the February 2011 motion to cash in a Certificate of Deposit. She learned that the bank will not make additional charges to the checking account. Therefore this action is not needed. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

New Business

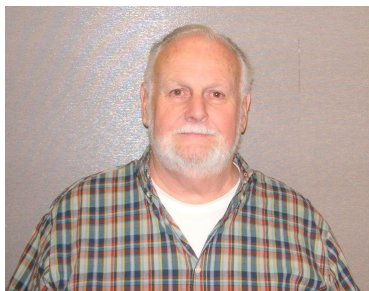
Patty Lowery is no longer our APCUG regional advisor, but requested that she continue receiving the SEMCO newsletter. Richard Jackson moved to send the newsletter to Patty Lowery and the current regional advisor. Bob

Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne has a supply of Penguincon ribbons that may be distributed at the convention April 29th. Michael Rudas, Richard Jackson, and Carol Sanzi agreed to take some of the ribbons.

Tom Callow stated that the refreshments are for the Social Period and not to be eaten throughout the meetings. It is felt that this behavior is distracting to the speaker and the audience.

Tom Callow moved to adjourn at 12:30. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried.



Gary DeNise
1937-2011

SEMCO notes the passing of former President Gary DeNise.

Gary was a member of the organization since 1999 and was President from 2001 until 2007. He passed away on March 27, 2011.

We will miss his cheerful manner, his curiosity, his optimism, and his willingness to assist whenever needed.

Our sympathy goes out to his family and friends.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

May 8: 1:45 p.m. New Computer: Mike Rudas will talk about what he installs first on every Windows PC that he works with, and why: The basic software and settings that should be on every Windows PC.

Pictures: Recent SEMCO Meetings: <<http://www.tinyurl.com/y8cm99e>>

Video: Recent SEMCO Meeting: <<http://www.tinyurl.com/363vnbd>>

Podcasts: Podcasts of SEMCO meetings can be found at: <<http://www.semco.org/podcasts.htm>>.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

May 17 (Tues): 5:30 p.m.: At the Madison Heights Library located at 240 West 13 Mile Rd. one block West of John R. The parking lot entrance is off Brush St. The lot and entrance to the library is located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.



SIG-IBM
INTERMEDIATE
Warner Mach

May 8: 3:45 p.m. Selected topics in Windows 7. SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will discuss a number of short topics on Windows 7, including Preme for Windows 7, a utility which adds several usability enhancements to Windows 7, Windows 7 keyboard shortcuts you might not know about, and how to tweak Cleartype for better screen readability.



SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas
Mike Bader



May 24 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. The building is on the Northwest corner of Wanda and Jarvis - The first traffic light south of 9 Mile, on Wanda. Topic: “Ubuntu Linux—what it is and why it matters, even if you don’t use it.”

June 2011 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)

SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., May 15, 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 Machwarnermach@gmail.com

(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS****COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

May 4, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday) Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <compinfo@greatlakes.net>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: Everything You Wanted to Know About HD TV but Were Afraid to Ask.

Focus: Hope IT User Group

1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <<http://www.fhitug.org/>>. See web site for details. Pre-registration required.

HUG (Holly User Group)

(Date?) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442.

MacGroup-Detroit

May 15, 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: "Digital Publishing to the iPad. Various ways of creating content for the iPad from eBooks to interactive publications." SIGs: 2:00 PM.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

May 21, (3rd Saturday); See web site for meeting time and location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: "Thumb Drive Fun - Not just for storing anymore."

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

May 14, 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: Multiple-server hot site backups + quick restoration on the cheap using Amazon's EC2.

Motor City Free Geek

Every Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. <<http://www.motorcityfreegeek.net>>. E-mail: <MotorCityFreeGeek@gmail.com>. Recycling & Open Source.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

May 10, 6:00 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): Engineering Society of Detroit. 20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, Southfield, MI 48076 . <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topic: TBA.

Oak Park Computer Club

Every Fri., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Library, 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)

June 7, 7:30 p.m.(1st Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic (tentative): "Backup, Issues and Techniques."



35th Anniversary cake for the April meeting. A project of our secretary, Carol Sanzi.



COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

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

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

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

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier

AutoCAD: Comptois

Genealogy: Cook

IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz

Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

Security: Bader

MS Office for Windows: Callow

MS Word: Clyne

Networking: Callow

Novell Netware: Yuhasz

Quicken: Clyne

Geocaching: Cook

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



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR

**Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield, MI. 48076
42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W**

May 8—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., New Computer: Mike Rudas will talk about what he installs first on every Windows PC that he works with, and why: The basic software and settings that should be on every Windows PC.

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate, 3:45 p.m., Selected topics in Windows 7. SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will discuss a number of short topics on Windows 7, including Preme for Windows 7, a utility which adds several usability enhancements to Windows 7, Windows 7 keyboard shortcuts you might not know about, and how to tweak ClearType for better screen readability.

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June 12—SEMCO Sunday

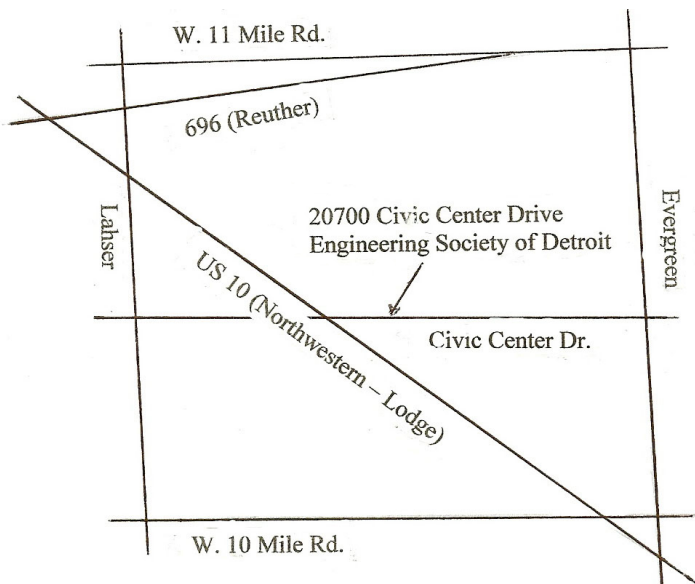
<http://www.semco.org>

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.

42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W



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)

May 8

June 12

**FIRST CLASS MAIL
Dated Material**

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