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IN THIS ISSUE

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

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NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS

Please take notice that under the Bylaws of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc., nominations for officers will be taken at the general meeting to be held Sunday, December 9, 2012 at 1:30 p.m., with the election of officers to be held at the January general meeting.
The following offices will be open for nominations:
1) President
2) Vice President
3) Secretary
4) Treasurer
5) Two Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

The annual meeting of the members of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc., will be held Sunday, January 13, 2013 at 1:30 pm at Engineering Society of Detroit, 20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, Southfield, Michigan.
The election of Officers and Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors of the Corporation will take place at the annual meeting.

Millions More Free Books to Download or Read Online
By Ira Wilsker

Since I was old enough to hold a book, I have been an avid reader. Our living room and all of the bedrooms in my house have at least one wall covered by a filled bookshelf. All of my children were brought up with a love of books and reading, a love that has been passed on to their children. On a regular basis I purchase books for myself and my family from the local bookstores, as well as online sources such as Amazon and Better World Books (my personal favorite). For the past few years I have been supplementing my physical book purchases with digital book purchases, purchasing titles that can be read on my computers or smartphone.

In past columns I had written about the vast libraries of free books available from Google <http://books.google.com>, and Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org>. While there is obviously some redundancy and overlap in titles between all of the resources, I have been downloading or viewing online countless free books from other resources including the Open Library, and the free libraries available from Amazon for its Kindle reader and Barnes and Noble for its Nook reader.

The Open Library <http://OpenLibrary.org> has an extensive library of well over a million ebooks available (precisely 1,191,271 ebooks available as I type this). Registration on the site is required for access, but registration is free and very easy; no personal information is required to register. The Open Library offers much more than just free ebooks, it also offers other interesting services to its members. Open Library has over a million titles labeled with a green, open book "Read Icon" which indicates that the titles with that icon are available to all for free. An orange lock "Daisy Icon" indicates over 250,000 modern ebooks available in the "Protected DAISY" format for the "U.S. print-disabled community." A green book "Borrow Icon" indicates any of the 10,000 titles that indicate a book that can be borrowed by anyone from the Open Library, limited to one copy at a time, for up to two weeks. This same "Borrow Icon" also indicates books that may be available to be lent to other libraries.

The Open Library is fully searchable with a variety of available search options. I did a simple search limited to ebooks of the word "nursing" and had 1,842 hits. The default display sorts the results by relevance, but the display can also be sorted by "Most Editions," "First Published," or "Most Recent." The results were about evenly split with titles displaying the "Read Icon" indicating that the book is available to anyone to read, or a "Daisy Icon" (yellow lock) indicating that those titles are restricted to the "U.S. print-disabled community." Being especially fond of antique books, I selected a readable version of "The Nurse," written by Luigi Tansillo, and first published in 1800.

Clicking on the title opened the menu displaying the available options for this particular book. For "The Nurse" there were several options presented. Being somewhat ethnocentric, I selected the 3rd edition published in English in 1804, rather than the 2nd edition published in Italian in 1800. I first selected the "Read Online" option, which opened a web based reader; this displayed images of each page of the book, along with simple and intuitive controls. One helpful feature was a speaker icon on the top-right corner of the display, which would read each page using a computerized speech synthesis, much like a traditional audio book. Other options available included the ability to download the book in a wide selection of digital formats including PDF, plain text, DAISY, ePub, DjVu, MOBI, and "Send to Kindle." With over a million other free ebook titles available in a variety of formats, there is likely to be something available for everybody.

It is hard to watch TV, read a magazine, or listen to the radio without hearing an advertisement for Amazon's Kindle or Barnes and Noble's Nook series of digital e-readers. While those tablet-like digital devices are enormously popular, both Amazon <http://tinyurl.com/9yeuuan> and Barnes and Noble <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/nook-mobile-apps/379003593> offer a wide assortment of free apps (applications) for almost all computers and smart devices including PCs, Macs, iPhones, iPads, Android smart phones and tablets, and a variety of other devices. On my Android smartphone and all of my PCs, I have downloaded and installed (free) both the Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble Nook

apps. While I can purchase millions of titles with either the Kindle or Nook apps, it is worthwhile to know that both Amazon and Barnes and Noble offer a large library of free books and other publications for download! As I type this, I currently have about 100 free books already downloaded to my smartphone, an available personable library to keep me occupied and entertained for many hours.

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Barnes and Noble's Nook e-reader is offering Amazon's Kindle some stiff competition in the e-reader market place. Barnes and Noble offers free versions of the Nook reader for almost all platforms and operating systems <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/nook-mobile-apps/379003593>, including a variety of tablets (iPad, Android, and "NOOK Kids for iPad"), smartphones (iPhone, iPod Touch, Android), computers (Windows and MAC), and a "NOOK for Web" which can be used in any Internet web browser. Barnes and Noble offers its nook users a huge assortment of free ebooks and Nook apps <http://barnesandnoble.com/u/Free-eBooks/379003078>; while many of the available books are full versions, many others are listed as "Special Free Previews" which only include a limited number of chapters rather than an entire book. As I type this, Barnes and Noble is offering 1,842,036 free ebooks (full editions), free apps for the Nook, and "Special Free Previews." One tip that I use to find the free Nook ebooks of personal interest is to select a category in the "Nook Books" directory, and then sort by price, with the lowest prices first—the free Nook ebooks rise to the top of the list.

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Slim Utilities—Excellent Suite of Free PC Maintenance Software By Ira Wilsker

A few weeks ago I wrote a column about several new versions of "all in one" PC maintenance utilities *[Editor's Note: See November 2012 DATA BUS].* In that column I mentioned that I was previously familiar with most of the utilities, but that there was one utility that was new to me, SlimCleaner <http://slimcleaner.com>. For review purposes, I downloaded and installed it, tried it, and wrote positively about my experiences with it. Not just was I favorably impressed with SlimCleaner, but so was cNet's <http://Download.com>, whose editors gave SlimCleaner its highest 5-star "Spectacular" rating. Now that I have had several weeks to perform additional testing of SlimCleaner, including a newer version that was just released, I agree with cNet's rating.

While SlimCleaner was the product that I originally downloaded and tested, the publisher, SlimWare Utilities <http://slimwareutilities.com>, has a suite of freeware utilities, each performing a specific PC task, filling a niche often skipped by many other PC maintenance products. Two other very interesting free products from this publisher include SlimComputer and SlimDrivers. According to the SlimWare Utilities website, "SlimWare

Utilities provides community-powered software and services that clean, repair, update and optimize personal computers." I found this "community-powered" concept interesting.

"Using community-based input to improve our products - makes our software into living, breathing products that evolve, improve and become optimized into the fastest, most efficient applications on the planet. Think utility software meets cloud computing meets Web 2.0." One feature that I especially like about all of the SlimWare Utilities is that once each component is downloaded, there is an option to create a portable version that can be installed on a USB flash drive such that it can be used on other computers without the need to install any additional programs.

My first impression of SlimCleaner was that it was a strong competitor to one of the most widely used PC utilities, CCleaner. CCleaner has been downloaded over 950 million times, according to its website <http://piriform. com>, securely cementing its position as the most widely used PC cleaning utility. I have CCleaner installed on all of my computers and have used it regularly. Now that I have experience with SlimCleaner, I have found that it does all that CCleaner does and much more. When I first experimented with SlimCleaner, I wrote that it was a comprehensive utility to clean and optimize the computer. In reality, SlimCleaner does much more than just clean and optimize; it also includes a sophisticated uninstaller, a software updater, an intelligent disk defragmentation utility, an assortment of disk tools and utilities, a disk analyzer, a disk wiper, SSD (solid state disk) optimizer, duplicate file finder,

an intelligent hijack log, a browser manager, and a large compendium of Windows tools. One interesting feature incorporated in all of the components of SlimCleaner is that, "SlimCleaner uses a real-time stream from the cloud to compare against community feedback and make recommendations."

I thought that I was pretty good in keeping my installed software fairly up to date, but the Software Updater in SlimCleaner proved me very wrong in my assumption. In SlimCleaner I clicked on Software - Updates which initiated a search of the software on my computers, followed by inquiry to the cloud about my software versions. While I have always been meticulous in keeping my security software properly updated, I have apparently neglected updating many of the programs on my computer, with SlimCleaner finding 46 programs on my computer that need updating, including several that I use regularly. Adjacent to the title of each program that needs updating is a "More Info" button and an "Update Now" button that immediately initiates the update process for the selected program. According to SlimCleaner, "Software updates are downloaded from SlimWare Utilities' cloud, and all updates are scanned for viruses using CloudScan technology, SlimWare Utilities' proprietary system of scanning files with multiple antivirus engines."

One unusual feature in SlimCleaner is the "Solid-State Drive Optimization" which allows users to intelligently optimize the placement of files in the solid state drive (SSD) to both speed up the loading of files while minimizing the wear on the SSD. These Solid state drives are becoming much more common, and their rate of installation in new computers will likely accelerate as more PCs are built with Windows 8 which is explicitly designed to take advantage of SSD equipped devices.

While there are several other utilities that incorporate some form of hijack log system, the Hijack Log in SlimCleaner is more powerful than a simple log generating device. The Hijack Log in SlimCleaner can, "Scan for startup items, toolbars, BHOs, ActiveX controls, browser plug-ins and other third-party or malicious items that can "hijack" or modify a system. Get direct access to SlimWare's cloud of antivirus scanners, or alternatively, VirusTotal, using the VirusTotal public API."

Though SlimCleaner is Slim Utilities flagship product, its other free products are also quite useful. One such utility is SlimComputer <http://slimwareutilities. com/slimcomputer.php>. This utility is more comprehensive than its better known competitors, and is used to remove useless programs and settings from new computers; most computer manufacturers load new computers with trial ware and a variety of other mostly third party products generally intended to provide a continuing revenue stream to the maker by selling paid subscriptions to those products, or otherwise generating "referral" income. Using its community powered system, SlimComputer identifies this "bloat ware" on a new computer, provides the user with information on the products and services, and gives the owner the option of deleting unwanted content. It has been well documented that much of this unnecessary software loads when the new computer is booted, which degrades the performance of the new computer. Among the promotional or otherwise unneeded software detected

by SlimComputer includes pre-installed software (often trial or limited versions intended to encourage the user to purchase full versions or subscriptions), browser toolbars which may degrade browser performance, unnecessary startup items that slow a computer's boot process and wastes system capacity and power, and removes useless shortcuts (often paid advertising links) on the desktop that link to the above unneeded and unnecessary items. Once SlimComputer removes (at the users' informed discretion) these unwanted items, SlimComputer optimizes the startup process and Windows services to improve performance.

The third free utility in this trilogy is SlimDrivers <http://slimwareutilities.com/slimdrivers.php>. This helpful utility automatically scans all of the internal and external devices and peripherals connected to the computer and scans the cloud to find and install the latest drivers for those devices. Among the items' drivers scanned include, "printers, graphic and sound cards, motherboards, USB ports, game controllers and other devices and hardware." SlimDrivers determines the latest correct drivers for the detected components and peripherals, retrieves them from the cloud, and installs them. As can all other SlimWare Utilities, SlimDrivers can create a portable version that can be used from a flash drive to detect and download new drivers to any Internet connected PC.

All of the SlimWare Utilities can run on any contemporary version of Windows, both 32- and 64-bit systems, including Windows 7, XP Home, XP Professional, XP Media Center, Vista Home, Vista Business, and Vista Ultimate. The mission statement of SlimWare Utilities "… is to provide software that solves the most common computer problems head-on with the cardinal points of Speed, Protection and Ease-of-Use." In my opinion, SlimWare Utilities' suite of products fully complies with its mission statement. All three components of this family will serve PC users well.

WEBSITES:
<https://www.slimwareutilities.com>.
<http://slimcleaner.com>.
<http://download.cnet.com/SlimCleaner/3000-18512_4-75279939.html>.
<http://www.slimwareutilities.com/slimcomputer.php>.
<http://www.slimwareutilities.com/slimdrivers.php>.

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Monsters of Media (Playing)

Microsoft Windows Media Player (WiMP) is the default media player for Windows—but besides being bloated and somewhat of a privacy hazard (xp-AntiSpy can help with that), its capabilities are mostly limited to the playback of proprietary Microsoft formats and such common media formats as MPG video and MP3 audio files. If users want to play Real media or Apple QuickTime formats, additional software and/or codecs must be installed. Also, as of Windows 8, DVD and Blu-ray playback are not supported within WiMP by default. The fact is that the free QuickTime package from Apple is crippleware; in order to get the fully-functional QuickTime Pro, you must pay extra. Similarly, the free RealPlayer package contains bloatware and is, potentially, adware. What's a user to do?

No one add-on media player package does it all (though VLC comes close), but the following three media player utilities in combination cover the gamut of available file formats pretty well; all three are free to download. They complement each other; if a file does not play well in one player, one of the others can usually handle it.

By the way, both the K-Lite codecs and VLC can both directly play back the FLV Flash video format used by Google Video, YouTube, and others. These videos can usually be saved locally via the Video Downloader plug-in for Firefox, which can be installed via the Tools —>Add-ons menu.

VLC Media Player

It's the very first alternative media player I install under Windows—if I only install one, VLC is it. Recently updated to the v2.0 series, it handles a variety of formats and is useful for files that may not play properly in the other two players mentioned here—it's also possible that VLC itself may be more to a particular user's taste than Winamp. It also differs from Winamp in that it is true GPL open source. VLC plays DVDs just fine, though Blu-ray playback is still considered experimental. VLC is also cross-platform software; versions are available that run under Linux and Mac OS X as well. For VLC, I do a Full install, selected from the drop-down menu during installation. When a user installs Winamp in this context, it will be set up to "steal back" most audio formats (except MP4).

Winamp

Winamp is freeware, though not open source (a paid Pro version is available). It's very good for playing a wide range of audio media formats (though not the best player for video formats). It's especially useful for playing Internet music streams like those listed on SHOUTcast and Icecast—and the available StreamRipper plug-in is useful (more on this later), but because we are installing it alongside others, there is a caveat that should be pointed out. It concerns the installation process: one of the initial check-boxes is for a function called Winamp Agent; you may want to uncheck this box, or else Winamp will hijack all the formats it sees as its default (this may actually be useful if you edit the default-formats list). You can, if you wish, choose to uncheck the boxes for Winamp Remote, the eMusic free downloads, browser toolbar, etc.

As part of the installation process, the user is able to select the formats that Winamp will play by default; I highly recommend unchecking the Video check box entirely, then opening the Audio menu and unchecking the MP4 check-box. Once Winamp is installed, go ahead and install StreamRipper, if you wish. It works well as a plug-in to Winamp and can also be used from the command line.

Winamp was one of the first programs to be skinnable—that is, able to have its window decorations be user-changeable—so go ahead and download a few skins that you might like. The included visualizations are also pretty cool.

K-Lite Mega Codec Pack

I have found the freeware K-Lite Mega Codec Pack to be a useful complement to VLC. It has a number of codecs and some are better-suited to certain formats than Winamp (the iPod-compatible MP4/M4V format for example) and for the occasional file that is incompatible with VLC (it's rare). An excellent streamlined basic player is included along with the codecs called Media Player Classic (MPC) which strongly resembles WiMP V6. The newly-installed codecs can also be used with the current version of WiMP. It can replace the functionality of RealPlayer and most functions of the QuickTime Pro player, too.

Once all three programs are installed you can fine-tune the file associations by right-clicking the mouse on a particular media file, then selecting Open With, then selecting which media player to use from the displayed list. If you want to make the file-to-player association permanent, the check-box at the bottom of the window allows this.

StreamRipper

This free utility allows you to download an entire station of music. Many of these MP3 radio stations only play certain genres, so you can now download an entire collection of Goa/trance music, an entire collection of jazz, punk rock, whatever you want. Also works with OGG streams. If the tracks contain individual ID information, they will be saved as individual files by default. As mentioned earlier, the Windows version includes a Winamp plug-in, which is very convenient; the program can also be invoked from a command line. There are versions available that run under Linux and Mac OS X as well.

Links page to software mentioned and definitions of terms used in this article: <http://goo.gl/y4X5R>.

Microsoft Windows Telephone Scam–BEWARE!!
By Jim Evans

This really happened to a user group member in California.

One of our members (I'll save him embarrassment by calling him "Jim") has just been the victim of a phone scam involving Microsoft. Not the "real" Microsoft.

Fearing viruses on his computer, Jim allowed the "Microsoft tech support" man on the phone to enter his computer electronically to check. The caller "found" red flags next to items on the computer that indicated viruses and offered to fix the computer —for a charge. Jim felt uncomfortable with this and said no. The "Microsoft"

scammer said he would block the use of the computer if he was not paid. Jim hung up.

Unhappily, Jim discovered afterward that the scammer had indeed done something while connected to the computer so that Jim could not use it or the Internet. Luckily, there was no financial or other sensitive information on the computer that could also have been taken by the scammer. If it had, that would have been another story. A very sad story.

However, not so luckily, Jim will not be able to use his computer again for a couple of days until it has been reformatted and all the programs reinstalled.

So, fellow members, this is an updated warning. It CAN happen to you. Jim wants you to know about and to learn from his awful experience. Here is a link at Microsoft that describes various scams using its name: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/msname.aspx>

From the Windows Secrets newsletter <http://windowssecrets.com/>:

"Everybody's Event Viewer has red and yellow flags. Check yours right now and you'll see them:
* Windows XP: Click Start, Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, Administrative Tools; then double-click Computer Management.
* Vista: Do the same, except for the final step. Double-click Event Viewer instead.
* Win7: Click Start, type Event, click Event Viewer.

On the left of the Event Viewer window, expand the Windows Logs/System branch. See the ocean of colored flags? They're mostly harmless, although they look alarming — which is

why Windows makes it difficult to find them. It's good fodder for a flimflam."

Links to Microsoft Telephone Scam articles/information:
Microsoft Security & Safety Center - <http://bit.ly/jxOzal>.
Microsoft Answers – Virus and Malware - <http://bit.ly/P4w9j2>.
InformationWeek Security - <http://bit.ly/Rp7oAI>.
abc15.com - <http://bit.ly/RbOedZ>.

Note from Judy: I've been on the phone with Jim Evans, APCUG Director, when he's been called by one of these scam people. He's using Skype with me so I was able to hear what the person was saying on his regular phone plus Jim's responses. This has happened twice within the last six weeks or so. The last time, he was really leading the caller on but was having trouble understanding what he was saying. Conclusion, you'd think the scammers would have a better grasp of the English language before they call. The Microsoft telephone-based scams have been around since 2008.

Jim Evans is an APCUG Director.
Judy Taylour is Chair of the APCUG Advisors.

Where's the Technology?
By Greg Skalka

With all the political posturing going on in this election year, we should be used to promises that go unfulfilled. In the technical arena, we hear a lot about potential new advances; though often wait a long time to see the benefits ourselves. Sometimes the prognosticators are wildly optimistic or the development proves too difficult,

and we never see (or at least haven't seen up to this point) the mass application of a great new product or technology (an example is the Segway personal transporter). I've bought a number of new computers recently, and have been a little surprised about some of the features currently available. There are a few features that I've some of the features currently available. There are a few features that I've been hearing about for a few years that still are not available on most new PCs. There are also features that I've never heard of that now appear to be standard. All in all, just like the 1980's Wendy's commercials that asked "Where's the beef?" I'm left asking "Where's the technology?"

The entertainment industry has also made its contributions to our unmet expectations for technology over the years. Remember the late 1960's television series "Lost in Space"? It was scripted to occur in 1997, yet we are still waiting for interplanetary space travel, talking autonomous robots and other innovations portrayed as commonplace. The movies "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "2010" portrayed many similar technological advances for times we have now passed. We do have the International Space Station, but it is not in the same league as the one in "2001." We never got the public videophone capability Dr. Heywood Floyd used to call back to Earth from the station in the film, though I guess it was really not much better than what we can do with Skype today. Some might argue it is just as well we don't yet have computers as sophisticated (especially in interaction with humans) as HAL 9000, though maybe IBM's Watson is getting close.

The reality of technological advancement in personal computers is that, though computers are not yet as sophisticated as HAL or Watson, they are pervasive. Only cell phones are more common now as tech tools in our society, and with smart phones the lines between phones and computers are blurring. There are often examples of advanced technology available to a few at great price, such as Watson in computing or the few wealthy individuals that have bought their way into space on a Russian rocket. These don't really portray the true advancement in technology available to the general public, so I've looked to the computers I've bought recently as a better representation of technology promised and fulfilled.

In the last two years, I've bought two new laptops and two new desktop computers for my wife and myself. These replace XP computers that were up to seven years old, and so represent a big step up in computer technology. The first replacement, and first Windows 7 machine in my house was an Acer Aspire X3950 mini desktop for my wife. Last year I bought myself a Lenovo IdeaCentre K330B desktop, and I bought a 15.6" Fujitsu Lifebook AH531 notebook for my wife. I liked the laptop so much I got a 14" Fujitsu Lifebook LH531 laptop for myself this year. All had Windows 7 and Intel i3 or i5 processors. These were not the fanciest nor the cheapest computers, but are ones I thought represented the best in value in the $400 to $600 price range. It is interesting to review the features available in these "typical" computers as compared to the latest technology has to offer.

In networking, we have come a long way. Once, everyone connected to

the Internet through a phone modem. Now modems are absent from new computers, having been removed years ago. Wired Ethernet capability became the replacement, proceeding quickly from 10/100BASE-TX to Gigabit Ethernet, which is now the standard on all new computers. All four of my new computers include 10/100/1000 wired Ethernet capability, though I don't take advantage of the increased Gigabit speed, as my router and switches are all still only 10/100 capable. A survey of Fry's items online showed that for new networking gear, Gigabit has not become the standard that it has for computers and laptops. Most new switches available are 10/100/1000, but only about half the routers are.

The big push in networking improvement is now in wireless networking. Wireless computer users started out in 1999 with 11 Mbit/s 802.11b, and have proceeded up the alphabet with 802.11g (54 Mbit/s), n (up to 600 Mbit/s) and finally ac (up to 1 Gbit/s). My two new laptops both are b/g/n capable, though once again my present router is limited to 802.11g. Here my home network is again behind the times, as most new routers only go up to n capability. Though Fry's does sell an 802.11ac router, I was not able to find any of their laptops with that capability. Even the thin Ultrabook laptops, which don't have a wired Ethernet RJ-45 connector, have yet to add 802.11ac to their features.

It is somewhat surprising to me that there has been such an emphasis on networking speed improvement recently, when for most people the benefits above 10/100 wired and 802.11g wireless are lost. Since few people have network hard drives, their network traffic consists exclusively of an Internet connection, which is often 10 Mbps or less. My Time Warner Cable plan presently gives me a measured 16 Mbps, but even if I bought the 50 Mbps "Ultimate" plan, my present network would not be a limiting factor.

The other typical computer interface is for peripheral devices. This used to consist of a serial port DB-9 connector, but computers lost those years ago. USB2 (Universal Serial Bus, version 2.0, 480 Mbps) became and still is the replacement peripheral interface standard, though now USB3 (5 Gbps) is finally appearing on some accessory devices and computers. USB3 adoption on computers presently appears to be related to price, with USB3 more likely on higher-end computers and laptops. None of my four new computers have USB3 capability, though Fry's showed it was available (often one port only, along with a couple USB2 ports) on some computers in the $500 to $1000 price range, and appeared to be on most all computers above $1000. It surprised me to learn that of the two versions of Microsoft Surface tablet computer announced, the one based on the ARM processor had a USB2 port, with USB3 only available on the Windows 8, Intel processor version. For some reason (perhaps cost), the adoption of USB3 has not gone as fast as I would have thought.

Another interface I'd thought would become more popular and prevalent is eSATA, but for some reason it has not. It provides an external interface for the 3 or 6 Gbps SATA interface commonly used on hard drives. Though eSATA interface cards are available to add to computers, I've not seen any new machines come with this interface

built in. Another very new high-speed serial interface that appears for now to be only available in iMacs is Intel's Thunderbolt; it promises 20 Gbps.

A surprise in the other direction is the addition of an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) video output to almost every new computer. It is present on all of my new laptops and desktops. Since HDMI is available on all new HDTVs as an input, it has become for me the default way to hook up a laptop to my TV. When I want to show new photos to my family, the best way is to display them on our HDTV, using an HDMI connected laptop as the source. Since there are more and more devices (like set top boxes, DVD/Blu-ray disc players and HD video camcorders) already competing for the few TV HDMI inputs, I think HDMI switches, which allow multiple devices to use the TV ports, will become popular.

Another new video interface, one I'd never seen before I bought my laptops, is Intel wireless Display, or WiDi. Though both my new laptops have it, I've yet to try it, as it requires a compatible TV or monitor, or an adapter. While the concept sounds good, I was not able to locate many adapters, and the one I did find on Fry's site was around $100. While it looks like Intel has pushed adoption of this interface on the laptops using their processors, having a TV to wirelessly broadcast video to will be the problem for now.

Another wireless interface that now appears to be implemented on almost all new laptops is Bluetooth. Typical uses include interface with Bluetooth mice and keyboards. While Bluetooth is available on both of my new laptops, I so far have no peripheral devices to use with it.

Blu-ray optical drive technology has been available for over five years, but it has not displaced the standard DVD as the most popular optical disc format. I think cost is again the limiting factor in its acceptance, as Blu-ray capability appears more often in higher-cost computers. At the lower end of the capability spectrum are Blu-ray read-capable drives, which start to become available in mid to high-cost computers. Blu-ray writer drives are presently available only in the upper price tier of computers. None of my new computers came with any Blu-ray compatibility.

As time goes on, I'd expect costs to come down and allow greater adoption of some of the new features that appear limited to high-end computers, such as USB3 and Blu-ray. Until then, all I can do is pay more, or ask "Where's the technology?"

Greg Skalka, is President of the Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA. Article is from the July 2012 issue, "Drive Light." Web: <http://www. uchug.org>. E-mail: <president (at) uchug.org>.

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Board Members Present
Present: President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advice Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-Linux Co-Chairman Michael Rudas, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Brian Brodsky. The board meeting was called to order at 12:05 P.M.

Old Business
Bette Gay reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of $9,040.65 with $4,282.88 in the checking account and $4,757.77 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership currently is 76, with one honorary membership. There are three complimentary mailings, for a total of 79 on the mailing list.

Bette Gay noted that she would not be running for treasurer for the next year.

Mike Bader reported that he is attempting to "claim" the SEMCO Facebook page. He wants to send a letter to Facebook using the SEMCO letterhead. It was suggested that Bob Clyne could provide the appropriate "template" to do this.

Bob Clyne indicated that he had renewed the group membership in APCUG. He will be checking to see that the PayPal charge went through.

There was discussion concerning the Webucator Internet training. SEMCO has a "code" allowing members to sign up for courses. But, apparently, the code allows free sign up for only certain courses. The code applies to "self-paced" rather than "instructor-lead" courses. Also, the total number of courses that the group can sign up for may not be unlimited, as first indicated. The actual max number of courses is not clear. The course code SEMCO has presently is good until the end of this year. Richard Jackson and Mike Bader are looking into some of these issues.

New Business
There was discussion concerning the proposed "planning session" to be held early in 2013. Warner Mach outlined the kinds of issues that would be discussed and why he thought the session would be useful and necessary. There was some debate over why such a session was needed over and above the normal board meetings.

Warner Mach moved that SEMCO should have the planning session to review outstanding concerns. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

Warner Mach proposed that the planning session should be held on Sunday January 20 at 1 P.M., with an emergency "snow day" backup of Sunday January 27. Mike Bader seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

Warner Mach and Richard Jackson had scouted some proposed sites for the planning session. An informal hand vote was held to decide between three proposed locations: (1) Pizzeria Biga on Main Street in Royal Oak. (2) Pasquale's on Woodward in Royal Oak. (3) Kerby's Koney Island on Northwestern Hwy in Southfield. The decision was to go to Pasquale's.

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SEMCO Meeting Pictures

(Above) Richard Tapaninen talked about gifts for the holidays.
(Below) Tom Callow discussed GPS and GPS navigation.

SEMCO Meeting Pictures

Artwork displayed at the Engineering Society of Detroit.

Board Meeting

Warner Mach noted that in December and in June "meetup.com" takes $72 out of his credit card account for the SEMCO listing on that site (i.e.: $72 for six months). He learns of the actual deduction after the fact. He requested an "ongoing automatic authorization" of this amount to avoid the appearance of seeking a retroactive authorization after the fact. There was some discussion, and a concern that this would be a sort of blank check, without an easy termination, if it was decided that meetup.com was not useful.

Bob Clyne proposed a one-time authorization of the meetup.com charge for December of 2012. Brian Brodsky seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Tom Callow proposed a motion that, in the future, Warner should have the automatic authorization, with the provision that he notify the board after he had been charged. This would give the board an opportunity to revisit the ongoing relationship with meetup.com. Warner Mach seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Richard Jackson requested $1.79 for the purchase of napkins. Mike Bader seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Mike Bader indicated that, although it was not strictly a matter of board meeting business, that SIG-Linux has had some recent difficulties in meeting at Motor City Free Geek and there were other organizational issues that needed review, including whether the group should continue. In light of these facts there would be a planning meeting on November 27 at Tracy's Corner Café in Warren at 6:45 P.M.

Michael Rudas apologized for not showing up at Motor City Free Geek for the last meeting and indicated that car trouble had prevented him from appearing.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn at 12:55. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

January SEMCO Planning Session By Warner Mach

SEMCO needs your help!

On Sunday, January 20, at 1 P.M. we will have a "planning session." The purpose of the session is to brainstorm ideas for the future of the club and to consider current problem areas. Some of the potential issues for discussion are: (1) Publicity and attracting new members. (2) Distribution of volunteer duties. (3) Meeting topics.

We would like to get input from as many members as possible. If you have ideas for improvement and are concerned about the future of the group, then please consider coming to the meeting for a couple of hours.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-COMPUTING
Tom Callow

Dec. 9: 1:45 p.m.: 2012 Year in Review: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will present a retrospective look at the events that shaped the world of computing in 2012.

SIG-TECHNIQUES
Warner Mach

Dec. 9: 3:45 p.m.: Online Courses: Vice President Richard Jackson will discuss online training for the study of computers and for other important subjects.

SIG-PROGRAMMING
Richard Jackson

Dec. 15: At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. Topic: Visual BASIC.

SIG-ADVICE
Franz Breidenich

Dec. 4 (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 are located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.

SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas
Mike Bader

There will not be a meeting in December because of the holiday.

JAN. DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Dec. 16, 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
Dec. 5, Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <bwcompinfo@gmail.com>. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: Annual Christmas Party.

DITUG: Detroit IT User Group (Formerly Focus: Hope IT User Group)
1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <http://www.ditug.org/>. See web sites for details. Pre-registration required.

HUG (Holly User Group)
Dec. 8, 9 a.m.-noon (2nd Saturday) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. Ron McCauley 810-629-9683. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup-Detroit
Dec. 16, 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. SIGs: 2:00 PM.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)
(See web site); See web site for meeting time and location <http://www.mactechnics.org>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)
Dec. 8, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); Check web site for location. Web: <http://www.mdlug.org>. Topic: TBA.

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)
Dec. 11. 9, 6:30 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): Farmington Community Library-Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <http://www.mug.org>. Topics: Rep-Rap and Web-based authentication (two-factor, OAuth, OpenID, etc).

Oak Park Computer Club
Every Fri., 10:30 a.m. at Panera Bread - in the Cornerstone Mall (on the west side of Greenfield, south of Mt. Vernon) just north of Krogers. Including Q&A.

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)
Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.(1st Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. Topic: Internet Safety: The New Threat Landscape and What YOU Should Know.

NOVEMBER REFRESHMENT DONORS
Coordinator: Richard Jackson
Donors:
Brian Brodsky
Warner Mach
Roland Maki

Note: For the Key Word to get a 40% discount (increased from 30% shown below) see Warner Mach - Editor.

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of people 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—586-447-6683, 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

Dec. 9—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-COMPUTING, 1:45 p.m.: 2012 Year in Review: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will present a retrospective look at the events that shaped the world of computing in 2012.

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

SIG-TECHNIQUES, 3:45 p.m.: Online Courses: Vice President Richard Jackson will discuss online training for the study of computers and for other important subjects.

SIG-PROGRAMMING, Dec. 15: At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. **Topic:** Visual BASIC.

SIG-ADVICE, Dec. 4 (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 are located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.

SIG-LINUX, No meeting in December because of the holidays.
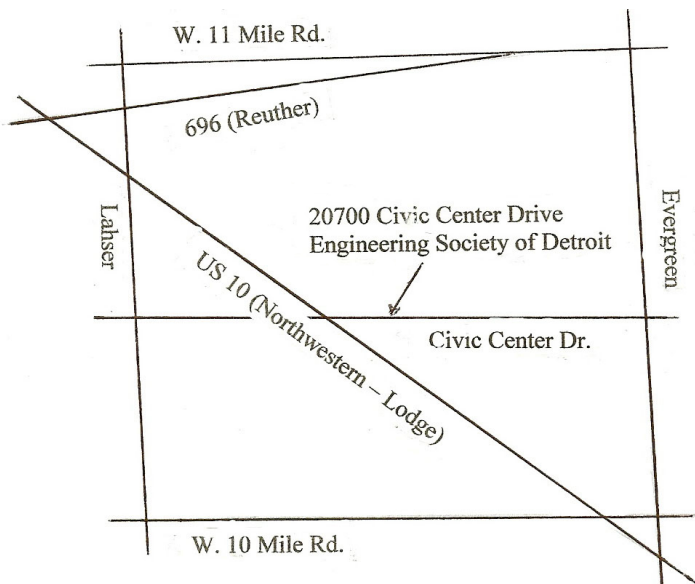
Jan. 13 - SEMCO Sunday.

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.

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

SEMCO (future meetings)
December 9
January 13

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