The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

MONITOR

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December 11 Penfield Library
A Computer Jeopardy Game

Contents

After Retirement, Who Are You?

by Gabe Goldberg

Advisor, Region 2; Columnist, CompuKISS.com

Retirement—even temporary job loss— can trigger discomfort with one's changed identity. Especially for those who have been strongly career oriented, the simple question, "What do you do?" can lead to fumbling for an answer. And when socializing or doing business or volunteering, it can be awkward not having the usual trappings of the grown-up world such as business cards.

Though called "business cards," they're hardly restricted to that context. Stay-at-home spouses, volunteers, and other folks often need a quick way to provide identification and contact information such as email address or Web site URL. They can also list concise emergency information and instructions such as medical history, allergies, medications, and someone to contact.

But with modern proliferation of such data — landline telephone number, cell phone number, instant messaging screen name, LinkedIn or other social networking Web site address, Skype number,

etc. — it's a challenge conveying one's whole story quickly.

Designing and purchasing cards the traditional way, using a real-world printer, can be a nuisance or daunting challenge, not to mention expensive. And personally printed cards—whether laser or ink-jet—never seem quite as polished. For an online alternative, visit VistaPrint, <www.vistaprint.com>, a user-friendly and economical source of personalized cards and many other customizable products.

Among VistaPrint's many attractive bargains is the opportunity to order 250 cards for free, paying only shipping. The small "catch" is that there will be a small/tasteful VistaPrint ad on the cards' back. But for a small fee, the ad can be omitted. And larger quantities can be ordered for rates far below those of local print shops.

These bargain cards aren't limited to boring just-the-facts designs; more than 40 backgrounds cater to the most serious or the most fanciful among us. My cards are businesslike, while my wife's show a more flowery and artistic personality. Having browsed the site's design spectrum I occasionally recognize fellow VistaPrint customers from their cards! More elaborate designs are available at slightly higher prices and custom designs can be uploaded to the site.

VistaPrint runs occasional sales and promotions, during which other products (sticky notes, T-shirts, desk calendars, invitations, announcements, note-pads, letterhead, etc.) are offered for just the cost of shipping or at greatly reduced prices. I've gotten essentially free personalized rubber stamps and refrigerator magnets showing my business card design. And the site offers a small bonus for referring new customers.

A very convenient feature is the site remembering details of orders for reuse or modification. So when I've moved or changed contact information, I haven't needed to redesign my cards from scratch: I simply update the information and reorder.

Having cards handy in pocket or purse eliminates having to scribble contact information on scraps of paper, and avoids someone having to later puzzle what's written. One warning applies, though: Consider how much information to reveal. Telephone number and email address, perhaps with city and state, may suffice without compromising privacy.

Q. I received a CD from a friend who told me that it has some .JPG photos on it. When I insert the CD into my CD-ROM drive, nothing happens. How can I see the pictures on the CD?

A. Most CDs, when inserted into a CD-ROM drive, will start or open automatically, but if yours is just sitting there like a passive, plastic pancake, double-click your My Computer Desktop icon. If you're using Windows XP and you don't have My Computer on your Desktop, click Start My Computer.

In the My Computer window, you'll need to identify your CD-ROM drive. Usually it's the D, E, or F drive, represented by an icon that looks like a round CD on top of a hard drive. Double-click that icon to display the contents of the CD, then double-click any .JPG image file to display a photo.

Q. I'm using the Firefox browser, thanks to your recommendation, and I really like it. Can you tell me how I can print Web pages in a larger font?

A. The process of large-print printing is virtually identical for Firefox, Internet Explorer and Netscape. Click File Print Preview, then in the Scale field at the top of the screen, adjust the percentage accordingly. Try 125 percent for starters. The larger the font, the more skewed the printed page may appear, but try a few different percentage increases and see what best suits your peepers.

Q. I frequently have to type the same phrases and the same paragraphs at work, plus my employer's name, which is long and difficult to type. Can you recommend a program that will automate that for me? Your newsletter tips and advice have really helped me, Mr. M. Keep them coming!

A. The best program I've found for entering frequently used words, phrases, paragraphs or even documents is TypeItIn (www.wavget. com/typeitin. html). It enables you to designate buttons that will enter any information into any program or Web site. You can create groups of buttons for work, home, or specific topics. With TypeItIn, you can also automatically type in the time, date, month, or day of the week. The program acts as a macro aggregator in that each button is really a macro that will "play back" whatever text is "recorded." Type your text in

once to create a button, give the button a name, then click it whenever you need to enter that text again. You can try TypeItIn for 60 days and purchase it for $19.95. I wouldn't be without it.

Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em)
Sites of the Month

Daily Kitten Macho

Testosterone-fueled guys like me, when we're not busy brawling in barrooms, participating in tractor-pulls or eating steel, hang out at rough-and-tumble sites like the Daily Kitten. What better way to start a day full of mayhem and chaos than with the picture of a little kitty. (Puppy lovers, don't get your kibbles in an uproar: Check out www .dailypuppy.com) and www.dailykitten .com

The Mom Song

Sung by Anita Renfroe to the tune of the "William Tell Overture," this is a YouTube must-see. Click the "more" link to the right of the video to read the lyrics. It's guaranteed to put a smile on your face. http://tinyurl.com/2wfat9

The Perfect Holiday Gift
for PC Users

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, what better gift for the computer users in your life (or treat yourself!) than an autographed copy of my world-famous, critically acclaimed, Pulitzer-lacking, "Mr. Modem's Web" CD-ROM? This CD features more than 1400 of the greatest Web site profiles of all time, segregated into 19 categories, all fully searchable and each site just a mouse-click away. The CD retails for $19.95, but as a loyal reader — you are a loyal reader, aren't you? — your price is only $12.95, with free shipping and handling. Visit http://tinyurl .com/hvnsn to view an excerpt. Use Promotional Code 6457 when ordering online to receive this special pricing. www. MrModem. com

Mr. Modem's weekly newsletter delivers easy computer tips, great Web sites and personal answers to your questions! Trial offer: Subscribe online using Promo Code 1146 and receive a free month with your 6-month subscription (28 issues!) To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit www. MrModem. com.

Using a Restore Point

by Larry Bothe
honorary member of the Fox Valley PC Association, IL and an associate member of CAEUG, IL

Recently, while in a big hurry to get a lot of work done before leaving on vacation, my computer started up with a blank screen. No mouse, no images, no text, no error message, no nothing. I had no choice but to just shut it down using the on/off switch. I then tried to start it again, this time watching very carefully to see what happened (I was getting coffee the first time). It went through the BIOS start (black & white screens with text) OK; then gave a brief color flash of the Windows XP logo, then nothing. The hard drive activity light was flashing so I knew the machine was trying. I was encouraged by the Windows startup sounds, but never got an image.

I recalled that the evening before I had received a warning from my computer security software that some program was trying to make a change to something it thought was a danger. I was in a hurry and I OK'd it without reading it thoroughly. Thinking back I decided that perhaps I had OK'd a bad thing that resulted in changing some setting in the operating system (Windows XP Home). I then crossed my fingers and tried starting the machine in Safe Mode. You do that by turning on the machine and then repeatedly pushing the F8 key until you get the black and white screen that lets you select the startup mode. Using the arrow keys I selected Safe Mode and pressed Enter. I lucked out and it started in Safe Mode.

Once in Safe Mode I decided to restore the system settings to an earlier point in time when everything worked correctly. In Windows XP every time you shut down your computer it takes a snapshot of your operating system settings and saves them into what is called a restore point. If you later install a program or get attacked by a virus that alters your system settings such that the machine no longer runs right you can in theory go back to some prior point in time when the machine ran correctly and restore the settings to what they were then. That's called a restore point. Note that you have to uninstall the offending program or get rid of the virus before you attempt a restore. Otherwise the program or virus will just alter your settings once again. Also note that going back to some prior restore point will not delete any files you created and saved after the restore point you select. You won't lose any data. However, I had never tried this before so didn't quite know what to expect.

In order to get into the routine you do Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore. After clicking System Restore you select Restore my computer to an earlier time, and then follow the prompts. The routine lets you choose a date you want to restore to. I had to think about that. It ran well the previous day, but that was the day the settings were changed. I chose to go back 2 days to be

sure I was well before the bad thing occurred. I finished the restore procedure and the machine restarted perfectly. It turned out to be a really good use of the restore point feature in XP.

I mentioned above that you must first get rid of whatever changed your settings in the first place before you do the restore. If you don't then you risk that it will simply alter your settings once again and you'll be right back where you were with a sick machine. In my haste to fix my computer I didn't take that corrective action, so when it restarted the malware once again tried to alter my settings. And once again my security software caught it and presented a warning. Being a bit smarter this time I clicked on Deny instead of Allow (OK). After the machine came up running properly I used my security software (Zone Alarm Security Suite) to do a full system scan for any malicious software. It did indeed find one bad thing (in addition to several spyware items), which I told it to remove. I guess that was it because I have had no more trouble. No, I can't tell you exactly what the offending malicious software was because I didn't write it down, and I have slept since then.

I learned several lessons from this little episode. A good suite of computer security orograms is worth every penny you pay for it. Even cautious computer users like me can get caught up in a virus problem. When your security software presents a warning you need to pay attention; I won't be so quick to click on Allow in the future. Finally, the System Restore feature in Windows XP is worth its weight in owl feathers. It is easy to use and very effective under the right circumstances.

Larry presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes. He also performs pilot examinations for the FAA. This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (deanholste(at)sbcglobal .net).

How to use Google Street Views to see…

streets, places, routes and faces!

by Linda Gonse

Editor and Webmaster, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA

Beyond the curiosity of the new panoramic on-the-road reality shots, Google's detailed Street Views give you a feel for really being where you want to go. Although only a handful of large cities are represented in these views, it's still likely

you will want to look for destinations in them occasionally.
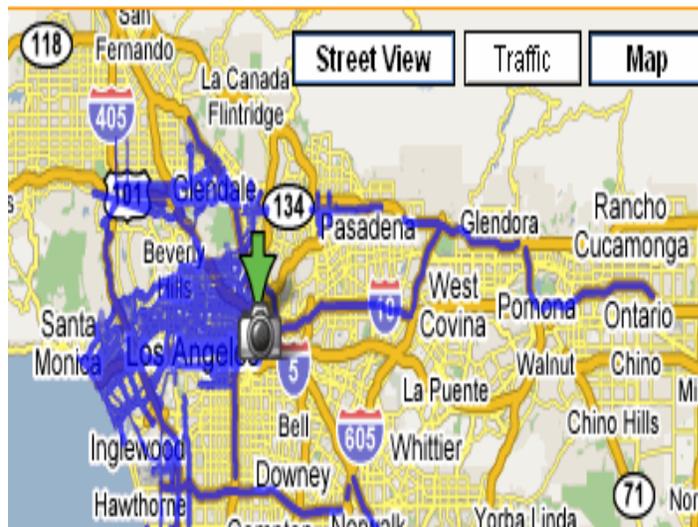
Figure 1

If you aren't familiar with Street Views, go to Google.com and click on Maps, a link at the top of the screen. Type in a location of a street or a city. If one of the boxes at the top of the map shown says "Street View," click on it.

A map looking like a plate of blue spaghetti shows where panoramic shots were taken. (Figure 1.)

Zoom in to see streets outlined in blue. (Figure 2.) A "person" icon (that's you) is facing in the direction you are heading. You can move the icon to wherever you wish to go, or simply double-click on one of the blue-lined streets.
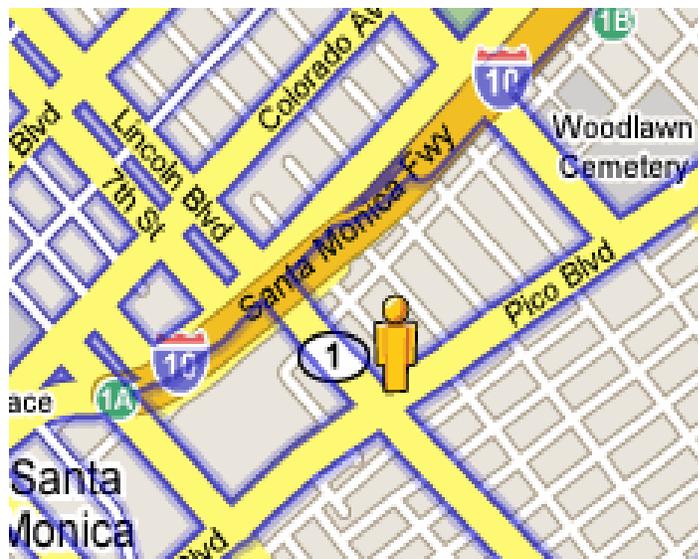
Figure 2

You can enlarge a panoramic shot to full screen, so you don't have to squint to see into a little peek-a-boo window.

Other handy features allow you to zoom in and out, and to "drive" along a street or freeway by clicking on an arrow with your mouse. You can look in all four directions, of course, and the names of the streets and the routes are superimposed on the photos. (Figure 3.) You can even email the view to family or friends.
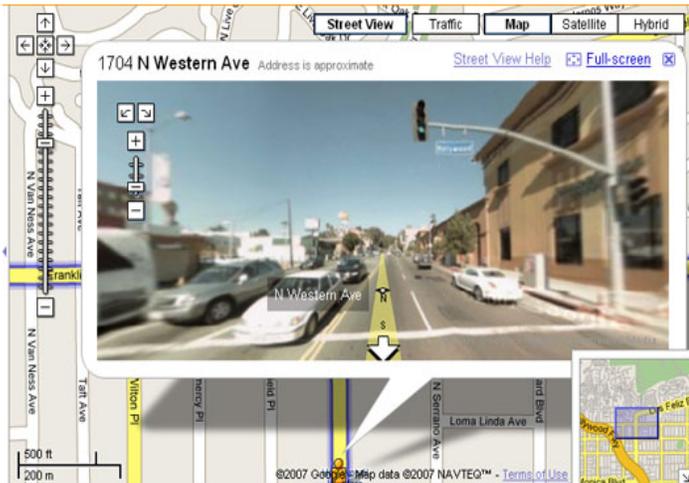
Figure 3

In the meantime, a different type of map searcher is ignoring the privacy controversy caused by Google Street View's high-quality, crystal-clear, panoramic photos, and are magnifying certain side-of-the-road scenes they find and sharing them online!

What they've found falls into categories, which include actual lawbreaking or crimes in progress, people doing ordinary things that seem extraordinary when you know that people worldwide will be seeing them; surreal sights caused by the panoramic camera being halted or later photo-stitching in an editing program; visual commentaries about places and people; and street views divulging the homes of the famous, or landmark homes and places. Map searchers uploaded these mini-slices of life to www.streetviewr.com.

Check out the maps and see what you can find. Maybe you'll even see yourself in one of the shots!

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Windows XP
Power Management

by Lynn Page
Editor, Crystal River Users Group, FL

If you use a laptop you know the problem of running down the battery before you finish up. But configuring power management can also reduce electrical usage on your desktop computer.

Power Options

By using Power Options, you can reduce the power consumption of your computer devices or the entire system. Choose a Windows power scheme or create your own. You can even adjust the individual settings in a power scheme.

Turn off your monitor and hard disks automatically to save power.

Put the computer on standby when idle. While on standby, the system switches to a low-power state where devices, like the monitor and hard disks, turn off and the computer uses less power. When you use the computer again, it comes out of standby quickly, and your desktop is restored exactly as you left it. Standby doesn't save to disk, so a power failure while on Standby can cause lose of unsaved data.

Put your computer in hibernation. The hibernate feature saves everything in memory on disk, turns off the monitor and hard disk, and then turns off the computer. When restarted the computer restores the desktop as you left it. It takes longer for the computer to come out of hibernation than out of standby.

Configure Power Management

To configure power management log on as an administrator, open Control Panel from the Start menu and click Performance and Maintenance. Then click Power Options in the Performance and Maintenance box.

In the Power Options Properties dialog box, select the Power Schemes tab. A power scheme is a predefined collection of power options. Select the power scheme that most closely matches how you use your computer in the Power schemes drop down menu. The power settings change depending on the power scheme chosen.

The power options available depend on the specific hardware in your computer system. Preset time settings appear in the Turn off monitor and Turn off hard disks lists on the Power Schemes tab. Change these settings by clicking the arrow and clicking the desired time.

After tailoring a power scheme click Save As and type a name to save your personal scheme.

Standby

To automatically put the computer on standby set the time settings displayed in System standby. To turn off your monitor before your computer goes on standby, select a time in Turn off monitor. To turn off your hard disk before your computer goes on standby, select a time in Turn off hard disks.

If you're using a laptop computer, you can specify one setting for battery power and a different one for AC power.

On the Advanced tab, you can adjust how the power buttons function. With a laptop/notebook computer, you have settings for closing the lid of the computer and pressing the sleep button. To manually put your computer on standby on the Advanced tab, under When I press the power button on my computer, click Standby. If you are using a portable computer, click Standby under When I close the lid of my portable computer.

Hibernation

Hibernation is a state in which the computer shuts down to save power but first saves everything in memory on the hard disk. When restarted computer, the desktop is restored.

To automatically put your computer into hibernation select the Hibernate tab, select the Enable hibernate support check box, and click Apply. Then on the Power Schemes tab select a time period in System hibernates.

To manually put your computer into hibernation on the Hibernate tab select the Enable hibernate support check box. Click Start, and then Turn Off Computer. In the Turn Off Computer dialog box, click Hibernate.

Laptop Low Battery Warning

Set Power Options to for a warning alarm when the level of battery reserve power falls below the levels defined as low or critical. You can easily change the battery level at which the alarm or message is activated.

To set a warning alarm select the Alarms tab in Power Options. Specify the settings in Low battery alarm and Critical battery alarm by dragging the sliders. Then click Alarm Action to select the type of alarm notification.

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The QWERTY Keyboard and Microsoft Office 2007

by Bob Schneider
Editor, The PC Keyboard, *Spring Hill Teaching Computer Club, FL*

Back in the mid 1800's, when the first practical typewriter was built, inventor C.L. Sholes arranged the keys in the QWERTY layout for a practical reason. He had to separate the most common letters to prevent the hammers from jamming. So many people knew that layout that although it was no longer necessary, it was maintained with the advent of electric typewriters. A much better (in terms of ease-of-learning and speed-of-typing) is the Dvorak keyboard layout developed in the 1920's. It puts the most commonly used keys under your eight "home" fingers. Once millions of people started with computers using the old QWERTY layout, better alternatives were doomed. Changing to a new keyboard layout involves the most difficult of human learning tasks. The tech-nical term from memory researchers is "proactive interference." That means an old memory (such as an old cell phone number you used before) interferes with your ability to learn a new memory (your new cell number). In layman's terms the most difficult task is to unlearn something you know well in order to learn something new. That is why we standardize some procedures, such as operating a standard transmission in a car. You will never find a car with the brake on the left pedal and the clutch on the right pedal, and you already know the gear-shift sequence and location. Airplane pilots will always find the altimeter in the middle of their visual field.

I've been a fan of and using Microsoft Windows for some time, starting with Windows 2.0 in 1989. There are surely many people who have been using it longer than I have, although I have not yet met one. For most of those years, Microsoft advertised the strength and beauty of following the Windows format. Using its standard Graphical User Interface (GUI), all programs would have the same look and feel. Learn one program and you could quickly learn to navigate around in any similar software. Microsoft required that look and feel, with common menu items, before it allowed a program to have the Windows logo. That was a giant advance from the haphazard layout and menu systems of early DOS programs. As a college professor and software teacher, the advantages for student learning and computer novices were quite obvious.

Now we have Office 2007. I suspect that if Corel (Word Perfect) had released that office suite, Microsoft would have denied them the right to use the Windows logo. The common Windows GUI was thrown out in Word and Excel. Traditional menu items were removed, unfamiliar icons and menus appeared, and familiar processes were moved to obscure places. The better you were at using earlier versions, the more you will have to first unlearn to use Office 2007. The brake pedal is on the left, first gear is on the right, and the altimeter is hidden behind the co-pilot. I am a power user of Microsoft Office. Actually, I used to be a power user. Now I must constantly go to the help menu (sorry, it is not a menu any more) to find the location of even the most basic procedures. I know how to do them; I just don't know where they are. It is time consuming and frustrating. There are some really nice features in Office 2007. One of them, unfortunately, is not "make it like the earlier versions."

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From the DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I'm Excited About My New Toys

We wanted a GPS device with a 4.3" screen (diagonally), and a unit with better features. We finally chose the Garmin nuvi 660 because it announces your next turn (street name) well before you will turn, and again just before you actually turn. It has a bright screen and includes traffic reporting capabilities without purchasing an FM traffic adaptor, which is in the DC cord you get with it. 90 days of traffic reporting is activated when you register it, but after that, you must subscribe for that service ($60 per year).

The nuvi 660 includes Bluetooth technology for hands free use with your Bluetooth cell phone. MP3 file use is also included and it has an SD slot. It will also talk through your car radio. The 4.3" screen is easier to see and it was on sale for $599 at BJ's Wholesale. Yes, I could have done much better on the Web, but I preferred to buy it locally for the ease of returning it if I so desired. A friend returned four before he settled on the Mio he kept. So far, we are satisfied in spite of two curious anomalies in the mapping that we encountered. MapQuest had given us worse in the same areas. I ordered a free CD to update the maps, but I'll have to pay for updates in the future.

Another new toy; a Kwikset Biometric Smart Lock, is for our house door. The last few years we used a Kwikset pushbutton lock that we could press the buttons for a preset code and it automatically unlocks. It' great if you can' find your key. You can also use your key. We were happy with the ease of use, but along came the Kwikset biometric lock. Simply slide your finger across the sensor for it to automatically unlock the deadbolt.

It looks like a conventional lock on the outside, but with a small fingerprint sensor sticking down from the key cylinder housing. It is powered by four AA batteries and the fingerprint data is stored in flash memory. It also works with a key. The interior lock housing is larger, containing the batteries, electronics and the lock's programming screen. It can store over 50 different fingerprints and the lock administrator can limit the privileges of any fingerprint to a certain time of day, and even a day of the week; and can make another user also an administrator. Any stored fingerprint data can be deleted or neutralized. A great feature of any Kwikset Smart Key lock is that you can *re-key* the lock yourself in about 15 seconds, and without any disassembly. That worked great. It also resists criminal *bump key* methods known to defeat many locks. Many people aren't aware that a clever thief can quickly and easily defeat most door locks using the *bump key* technique. Check: <http://www.toool.nl/bumping .pdf> for info.

If the lock would work as advertised, we would love it for its simplicity, but that hasn't been the case. Often my finger works the first time, but not always and I must rescan several times. My wife has less success and *often* has to scan her finger several times, sometimes resorting to her key (and a few unkind words). Their telephone tech support was little help, although we couldn't get my wife's finger to unlock it at all until after they walked me through a setting change. Her finger now works, but not consistently. Their on-line tech support feels we aren't scanning correctly, but we have tried the video's approach and some other techniques with no improvement. We purchased it at Home Depot, but it appears they will get this very unreliable item back. Their Web site tech support was a joke and the English part didn't work for me. I asked them to send a new sensor, but they said that would take at least a month. This product really tries your patience. There is an installation and programming video on the Kwikset Web site <http://www.kwikset .com> that makes it seem easy, but we're giving up. The price at Home Depot is $199.95.

And a Good Time Was Had by All!

I attended the fall conference for FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) and it was nice to see everyone. Attendance was about average for their one-day fall event with 80 attendees from 29 user groups. Central Florida Computer Society (CFCS) was the host and the FACUG conference coincided with the CFCS 2nd annual Tech Fair, a two-day event featuring many great seminars and products with a host of local vendors selling their wares. The conference included breakfast and lunch and they kept you busy for the entire event, ending with a nice drawing for the FACUG event, and another drawing the next day at the Tech Fair. Unfortunately, the CFCS event was not well attended by their membership.

I also met APCUG president Jay Ferron and got some updated information from him. Nobody could be more positive about APCUG's future then Jay.

Help for Cut and Paste

Flashpaste Professional by Softvoile is a utility that lets you type a boilerplate text, save it to a mini-database, and paste it automatically into any document, e-mail, Word document, Web page, chat, etc. Just click "CTRL-U" to pop up a dialog box where you pick the auto text you need and paste it into a document. "Click the "New Item" button and type in the name of the item, and then set its type folder to RTF or simple text. Just type the boilerplate text into Flashpaste and fill in all the fields without having to step out of the submission page several times. The record is then added to the tree of items in the Flashpaste main window."

The standard Windows clipboard keeps only the last copied text, but Flashpaste records all recently copied words, numbers and phrases allowing easy reuse and eliminating repeated copying and pasting. Flashpaste Professional helps perform a variety of tasks such as automatically inserting frequently used addresses, e-mail text blocks, HTML code snippets, words, phrases and paragraphs. Flashpaste can also create macros and strings that are either replaced or processed by an application. Using macros, you can paste current time and date, insert commands that emulate pressing the Tab or Enter keys, and more.

Download Flashpaste Professional using this link: <http://softvoile.com/download/ flash pastepro .exe?s=ng9> (1.1Mb). Use the discount coupon (bcddc) that gives a 25% discount from the $29.95 list price. Offer valid till Feb. 01, 2008. A 30-day evaluation copy can also be downloaded. I' not sure if it will be a fully-working version or if they will send you a key

for the trial version. <http://softvoile .com/> Visit their Web site for more information about Flashpaste features <http://softvoile.com /flashpaste/?s=ng9>.

An Interesting Freeware!

DVDVideoSoft Limited <http://www.dvd videosoft .com> has updated its free software, Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion. The free software enables users to download a video from YouTube and convert it to MP4 video and MP3 audio format for playing on an Apple iPod, iPhone, Sony PSP or cell phone. With just a few simple steps, users can enjoy their favorite online videos without having to sit in front of the computer.

Users enable Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion by inserting a link into the program interface and clicking the 'download and convert' button. The software downloads a video in MP4 format or audio in MP3, which can then be uploaded to a portable player or mobile phone. The program also converts a Flash video file to MP4 video format.

DVDVideoSoft has already created a line of free tools: Free YouTube to iPod Converter, Free You Tube to MP3 Converter, Free You Tube to iPhone Converter, Free Video to iPod Converter, Free Video to iPhone Converter, Free Video to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube Uploader, Free Fast MPEG Cut, Free 3GP Video Converter and Free Video to Flash Converter. All their programs are absolutely free and run under Windows, including Vista. They say they respect the users' privacy and there is no spyware or adware. The programs are available in different languages, for example: English, German, French, and Japanese.

Besides free downloads, the site provides many tutorials and guides. For more information and free downloads visit DVDVideoSoft at <http://www .dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd- video-software.htm>. In addition to its software site, DVDVideoSoft runs a free On-Line Video Conversion resource VIDOKY <http:// www.vidoky.com>, a popular video download site.

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

Tales from the Kingdom
of the Ordinary User

by David D. Uffer
Chicago Computer Society

Of Avery, CDs, Squaring the Circle, Selected Greek Classics, and Tantalus —

Plus a Resolution

We have all heard of the name Avery, the global leader in assorted office supplies, self-adhesive labels (but probably not yet the US Postal stamps), dividers, markers, and such. You may not have heard of Paxar, whose Monarch Division seems to be the culprit behind those wonderful price and info tags attached to clothing and other goods and hanging by tough, tiny plastic strings you cannot break or pull loose but must cut and then seek the remaining portion which is often inserted out of sight, waiting to annoy you further by scratching your skin if not removed. Well, Avery just acquired Paxar in a deal worth 1.3 billion bucks. Such is the price of the right annoyance. So Avery deserves respect, maybe even reverence if judged by revenue. It is after all the standard index referred to by more reasonably priced packs of blank labels for use in PC printers. But this user may have lost some respect for this global leader as if they care because of a wild, redundant search they placed in my path.

In an effort to avoid losing sight of most other user's progress, I tried to catch up to a common practice in this age of proliferating digital photos. I collected some pictures taken in Greece onto some CDs, learning how to do it by trial, error, and reading instructions when desperate. Results were impressive. Buoyed up by approaching the League of the Big Guys, I wondered why their handwritten CD content titles were so curt and scruffy when labels were available to display more readable and detailed information. A single label
 might conceivably cause imbalance problems as a CD revved up its speed as the drive's internal laser moved to the outer tracks. But a pair of properly placed labels could offset each other for a smoother spin. OK, two labels could also display more informa tion than one, fine. But Avery makes these disk-shaped labels with the core hole to cover the entire disk and display anything the user wants to fit in the still larger space, even graphics. Finer, better. Big league catchup.

Tantalus -- Joseph Heintz the Elder, 1535   www.mythman.com

Beset by pride and hope of grandeur, I bought a set of holey Avery disk labels. Swallowing my pride, I looked at the instructions. Those that came with the labels explained the technique for correctly applying the label to the disk, center holes exactly aligned. Neat. The package and online directions, showing an imprinted disk, said to use an indexed template, Avery's # 8931 or 5931, in *Word* or *WordPerfect*. Each had 2 variants, CD face and CD case. All I wanted at the time was the round disk face, maybe later for the almost square disk case label if I wanted to venture further. But, in actual use, all the templates allowed was an image without a central hole. Worse still, all the patterns for the circular disk were square.

OK, so maybe Avery wants users to use Avery's printing software. It is available online, for free. So they claimed. A slightly larger version with more graphics is also offered for sale. Both would do at least some graphics as well as a blank face for imprinting just text. So they claimed. I'll spare you the details of repeated and finally successful attempts to secure the software. Guess what. It was the same as what I found earlier online. I could print text all over a solid square to go onto a holey disk. A square on top of a circle. Not right. No help.

Now, squaring a circle is one of three classical problems in the early development of Greek geometry. (The other two were doubling the cube and trisecting an angle.) It was known to be difficult and proved impossible in precision in 1882 because it involved the imprecise term, pi, though a near approximation could get the job done for those who

were interested. One of the sites referenced in Google for "squaring the circle" delivers a 7-page article replete with a barrage of real and legended ancient Greek names. [If you enjoy their rich pronunciation, you may be amused by the names pun near the end of this tale.]

So it would seem that Avery has squared the circle, at least to their own satisfaction. Now if they could only work it in the other direction, circling the square to the users" satisfaction and punching a hole in the center, it might increase my respect for this global leader. Indeed, in consideration of my pain and suffering, if Avery were to send some workable software—or a minute share of 1.3 billion—in this direction, that wavering respect just might become a bit reverential. That upgrade in regard seems unlikely since it appears they think a square is the working equivalent to a circle with a center hole. There may be some hidden transformation formula there. If so I consider it well concealed. It does offer Options, which merely present other Avery patterns, none applicable to the problem at hand. For that matter, Avery's CD/DVD patterns weren't either so one could say the others were no worse.

But yet all their promotional illustrations show attractive disks with text and graphics plus a range of alternates, all just out of reach. This user is reminded of the mythical Greek god Tantalus, a son of Zeus, who must have messed up pretty badly since he was later doomed to the Underworld, up to his chin in water with delicious fruits just out of reach. That's the origin of "tantalize," which also applies to Avery's promo pictures of decorated, circular disks — in your dreams. However one thing becomes clearer, why I had seen the hand-written CD title inscriptions. We are not alone, as they say, just ignored.

[There is this two-word pun on classic Greek names which has a man showing his torn pants to a tailor who asks, "Euripides?" The customer nods and replies, "Eumenides?"]

As it usually happens in children's books —and sometimes in real life—there is a happy ending to this tale of corporate woe. It comes from Brøderbund (a "band of brothers) in a loose translation of mixed Swedish, Danish, and German). Now spelled more simply as Broderbund and part of Riverdeep, they have over 20 years developed and offered *The Print Shop* software, now in version 22. It is now substantially more than the basic graphic printing application it was originally but remains readily available and reasonably priced. In the last few years they began enabling printing your choice of graphics and text on CD and DVD labels. No hype, no fanfare, just competent performance, good to know, and a pleasure to use. So, you can buy your blank CD and DVD labels from Avery but print them with software from the brethren.

Dave Uffer is a member of some standing in the Chicago Computer Society. Originating in Colorado deep in the last century, he arrived in the Midwest and settled in the Chicago area where he has held a variety of honorable but not especially honored positions in computer-related fields. He and his wife are now retired, children grown and away; he sometimes writes about the often neglected concerns of real PC users. This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (david uffer(at)sbcglobal.nete).

How To Find Podcasts

by Mike Lyons
Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA

Download the free 7.3 iTunes program from www.apple.com/itunes/ and install. Now, all you need is an mp3 player, and you're all set to download podcasts and listen to them on the go.

When you first open iTunes, click on the "Podcast Directory" at the bottom next to "Report a Concern." That actually takes you to the Apple Store. In the upper left corner is a magnifying glass and a space to search for a word or phrase. Type in "computer." The Apple logo in the top center area changes to a candy cane-striped bar as it searches. The bar will turn solid and display the results: Name, Time, Artist, Album, Price, Popularity and Genre.

Next to the name is a grayed-out circle with an arrow in it. This leads to more information about the podcast. It includes a description, user reviews, a list of the last 20 podcasts and a list of 5 "Listerners also subscribed to."

Headings are sortable by clicking on them, so if you click on Price, all the free ones appear at the top.

Some of the stuff is pretty explicit, that's why they call it the "wild, wild web." Podcasts are labeled "clean," "explicit," or blank which means the rating hasn't been determined.

I look to see how often and consistently the podcast occurs (some really good ones haven't been updated since 2006), check customer comments, and the "Also subscribed to" list.

If you want to subscribe, simply click on the "subscribe" button. To go back where you were, under the Apple logo on the left is a small button with a left pointing twirly. Click on this to get back.

After downloading podcasts, connect your mp3 player to a USB cable and right click on the file. Select "Send to" and click on the drive letter of the

mp3 player to transfer podcasts to it from your computer.

Besides the iTunes Podcast Directory, you can find podcasts of Computer America shows at www.businesstalkradio.net/weekday_host/Archives/cc.shtml and National Public Radio at www.npr.org/rss/podcast/podcast_directory.php.

There are even locally-produced user group podcasts. The Los Angeles Computer Society has podcasts of their main meetings at www.lacspc.org/podcast/Archive.html

You don't have to have an mp3 player to listen to podcasts, though. If you left-click on the mp3 title, it plays right in your browser. Or, if you right-click on the title, select "Save Link As," and you can save it to a directory on your computer.

Besides playing podcasts in mp3 players and browsers, mp3 files on your hard drive can be burned to a CD. Then, you can play them in your car. Just burn them as a music CD instead of a data CD.

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Fake Check Scams Explode on the Internet

by Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio and TV Show Host

You may remember the recent case of a local woman who responded to a "work at home" opportunity where she would accept payments from the customers of a business, deposit the checks, deduct her generous commissions, and then wire the balance elsewhere.

Recently, in my High Tech Crime Consortium (HTCC) listserv, an investigator posted the following inquiry (redacted): "Is anyone working a case involving a fraudulent check from XXX Bank on the account of YYY Financial Trust Company, a supposed winner of a drawing scam. My victim received this letter and check, deposited it and XXX BANK told her it was good so they put the money in her account. Turns out it was not. She of course was told to wire "taxes" in the amount of $4425.00 to a subject XXXXX in Houston, Texas, but the money gram was picked up in XXXXX."

Recently, (October 3), the Reuters news service ran a story "Spam-scam crackdown nets $2 billion in fake checks." The story goes on to explain, "An international crackdown on Internet financial scams this year has yielded more than $2.1 billion in seized fake checks and 77 arrests in the Netherlands,

Nigeria and Canada, U.S. and other authorities said on Wednesday. The scammers, often West African organized crime groups, use ploys such as "spam" e-mail offering to pay recipients "processing fees" for depositing checks, which later turn out to be phony, and sending the ostensible proceeds to the scammer, authorities said." Demonstrating how prevalent this scam is, the Reuters article goes on to say, "Two-thirds of Americans said they received at least one potential scam contact per week, and 18 percent said they or a family member had fallen for one, in a survey conducted for an alliance of banks, consumer groups and the U.S. Postal Service. Grant said complaints to her group about fake checks have risen 60 percent this year, and the average victim loses about $3,000 to $4,000."

In a parallel news story at FoxNews.com (October 3), "Postal Service Declares War on Nigerian Scam," in discussing the same seizure writes, "So far this year, an average of more than 800 people a month have filed complaints about such scams. Hoping to stem the losses, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service announced an international crackdown Wednesday in which more than 540,000 fake checks with a face value of $2.1 billion have been seized." The financial and emotional impact of being a victim can be disabling, "Retired people have lost their nest eggs and young families have been defrauded of their savings for a home."

If 800 people a month report losses to the Postal Inspector, one may wonder how many other victims are too ashamed or embarrassed to report the crime which victimized them.

You may have noticed some TV commercials warning about these scams, another indication of the degree of the threat. The commercials are promoting a consumer education website fakechecks.org, a creation of the National Consumers League, and sponsored by groups such as the American Bankers Association, American Express, Capital One, JP Morgan Chase, Visa, Western Union, and the United States Postal Inspection Service. The meat of the website is a curt warning that says, "There is no legitimate reason why anyone would give you a check or money order and ask you to wire money in return."

The major types of scams that use these methods are foreign business offers, rental schemes, love losses, sudden riches, overpayment, and work at home scams. The common thread in all of these is that in response to an email, phone call, or letter, the victim received certified or cashiers' checks, or money orders, and was directed to deposit them in their

personal bank accounts. Immediately after depositing the instruments, the victim was directed to deduct his commission or fee, and then wire the proffered balance (often via Western Union) to the crook. The checks and money orders would bounce as they were typically counterfeit, forged, or otherwise phony, leaving the victim with the financial loss for the amounts wired to the crook. The proceeds of the wired funds are often picked up overseas, and not at the address stated in the original offer.

Many of us have received the ubiquitous Nigerian 419 scam from the relative of some oil minister who was killed in a plane crash, and the widow needs help in investing the money. In the original scam, still circulating by the millions, the victim is to wire money to Nigeria or some "barrister" in London in order to pay the taxes and fees to release the funds, for which the victim is to receive a generous commission. In a new iteration of the scheme, the victim receives an email or letter that alleges that the crook claims to have a check which can be used to pay the taxes and fees, and in exchange for depositing the check and wiring the net proceeds to a third party, the victim can withhold a generous commission. Of course, the check is worthless.

In another version, also distributed in the millions, the victim receives an email, letter, or fax claiming that they have won an international lottery. In the past, the victim had to come up with the taxes and fees on his own, and wire the money to the crook in order to collect the winnings. Now the scheme sends the victim an authentic looking check which is to be used to pay the foreign taxes and fees on the prize winnings. The victim deposits the check, which may also include a small percentage of his winnings, and wires the taxes and fees to a third party. The check bounces, and the victim is out the proceeds, often in the $3000 to $4000 range.

I have actually had students who advertised their cars online, and received a call or email from a barrister in London representing a client who wanted to buy the car for the full asking price. They would then overnight a certified check to the seller for more than the selling price of the car, and ask the seller to wire the balance back to London, sometimes after deducting a generous fee or bonus. A bonded courier will be by to pick up the car. Of course there is no courier, and the check is no good, leaving the seller with his car plus a several thousand dollar loss.

Another student recently brought me an email where she could make hundreds of dollars a week by accepting checks and money orders from a seller that

needed an American presence, asking her to deduct her 20% commission, and then wiring the proceeds to some distant place. The scam is obvious.

Greed and gullibility can affect all races and religions. The website fakechecks.org may provide a valuable warning to those who might fall victim. If the Postal Service can seize 540,000 fake checks worth $2.1 billion, one may wonder how many were not seized, and made it to the victims. One can only wonder how much more was lost by the victims, often those who can least afford it.

Society News

November Planning Meeting
by John MacMillan, Secretary

Because November 6th was Election Night, Bob Avery, Tony Dellelo, Mike Lavelle, John McMillan, Dan Rothfuss, and Steve Staub met in the Brighton Library for the Planning Meeting. The group felt that Arpad did a good job on Gifts and Gadgets though perhaps not as close to the cutting edge of technology in the area of gadgets as previous years.

Tony Dellelo will be talking about building a computer at the November Society meeting to be held at the Brighton Library. Methods and reasons for partitioning a hard drive are expected to be included as well as setting up the operating system. A computer based Jeopardy game is planned for December and Mike Lavelle is negotiating with several presenters for 2008 topics. Steve Staub has been exploring the possibility of a Linux **S**pecial **I**nterest **G**roup. Stay tuned and be sure to check the Web Page for late breaking news or possible changes in Topics or locations.

For the last few months, the *Monitor* assembly process has gone very smoothly being completed around 1 pm. The committee's discussion of ways to reduce the cost of *Monitor* production continued with new thoughts and additional data about postal costs.

November Meeting Minutes

by John MacMillan, Secretary

Steve Staub started the business portion of the meeting saying that members whose dues are in arrears should see him. Several had renewed this evening but the treasury was still very low. He went on to state that the format of the Monitor is quite likely to change from 8.5 by 14 inch paper to of 8.5 by 11. Despite the added pages to maintain the content level, paper costs are estimated to be reduced by 30 % and mailing costs by over 40%. While not a monetary benefit, printing time is also expected to be reduced. He again mentioned the need for keeping home and E-mail addresses current to be sure of receiving the Monitor and special notices to members while minimizing expenses to the society.

The Monitor will be printed and assembled November 17th at St. Stephens Church. Steve said that many cases of computer books had been received from a former programmer and member. Some contained disks that are stored separately but are still available and others are in their original wrappers, they are currently stored at St. Stephens. Members are invited to stop at the church after 9:30 to check them out. A small donation for anything found to be useful would help the treasury. Those not taken by members would be considered for sale on E-bay; used as door prizes; or recycled.

Mike Lavelle has been contacting potential speakers including one who might do a teleconferencing hookup for a presentation from the Boston Area. There will be more information on this if it gels. Dave Thompson announced that the Digital Photography SIG will meet the first Thursday of December at St. John's Meadows. He will be sending e-mails to those on his distribution list. Steve also said that steps are underway to establish a Linux SIG That may meet early in 2008. There was a surprising show of hands of those interested.

The December meeting will be held in the Penfield Library and feature a repeat of the popular Jeopardy game with Arpad presenting a new series of computer related questions. Steve requested that cookie donations would make for a more festive meeting. Members were also asked to stack the chairs after the presentation.

During the social break, Tony set up a working computer to present his slides plus a number of computer components that would be used in his computer building demonstration. Unfortunately the Library's projector was not working. Tony repositioned the monitor so the audience could see the reduced size pictures. He said the slides would be sent to the RCSi web page. This added to his footwork as he moved around the table to keep the slides aligned with the various assembly steps. The tools he used included small Phillips and flat head screw drivers, a pair of pliers, flashlight, and a magnifying glass (which I don't remember him using) for reading part numbers or small print in the instructions. A set of small hex head drivers would be helpful but he didn't use them since some people might not have a set.

He started by describing several varieties of cases, many of which have a short, built in pipe in a standard location to funnel heat away from the mother board. Some feature splashes of color or flashing lights but since many of the computers he assembles are donated to needy children, plain cases reduce the final cost without affecting the function-ality.

Before starting the assembly process, Tony stressed the need to eliminate static electricity that could damage the components. Wrist straps are a good investment if you plan on doing much of this kind of work. His suggested touching the center screws of an electric outlet or switch or perhaps a nearby operating computer.

Tony did an excellent job of displaying and describing each part as it was added to the empty case starting with the mother board. He pointed out some of the features built into the mother board like the CPU, clock, battery and memory slots. Some mother boards may include onboard graphics and sound components but separate boards often provide independent memory for those functions. More powerful boards may have a heat sink or even an extra fan. Newer mother boards have USB, Firewire, microphone and other connections on the front as well as the back for greater convenience.

One of his helpful hints was to add memory chips and other extra elements with the mother board on a flat surface before being installed inside the case. Critical elements are often notched or shaped in some way to prevent inadvertent misplacement. Firm steady pressure while inserting components is less likely to bend the delicate wires or pins used to make the connections. Also using a special compound around the processor helps create a better connection. One of the many tips given out was to align all screws for a component before tightening them up, to be sure they fit.

He described the 400 watt power supply and noted that they are increasing in size as more and more peripherals are being added to systems. After circu-

lating a hard drive (not the one to be used), he discussed the installation and the ribbon used as a data path. Newer Sada drives reported to be faster than IDE drives have a much smaller connector ribbon. Reversing the hard drives power supply cord will blow the drive as he could attest from experience. Any data on the disk would be intact but extracting it would be another matter.

Next came the CD ROM drive with its data ribbon. He reiterated the cautions about grounding, suiting the words with action. A lot of people these days use thumb drives or card readers for removable storage but Tony likes to include a floppy disk drive for handy inexpensive external storage.

In preparation for powering up, he plugged in a keyboard and mouse and then transferred the monitor from the working computer to the one under construction. After pointing out that the power and floppy indicator LED lights could be clues to reversed connections, he threw he switch. Wallah! The lights signified success but he also suggested checking to see that the fan was pushing air out the vents.

To save time in the building process, Tony had used a hard drive preloaded with Windows 95 and Windows 98. We were able to see the memory check and other system loading steps scroll down the screen followed by the Windows Logo and then the desktop. He said that once the components were gathered, the assembly should take an experienced technician about 20 minutes if he was not stopping to explain every step.

Tony finished his presentation with a discussion about partitioning the hard drive. Two partitions are a must if you anticipate using multiple operating systems such as different versions of Windows or Windows and Linux. He likes at least 4 partitions to be able to isolate program files and separate data files by videos, pictures, and research projects. This helps facilitate backups by limiting the process to the more volatile files. The best time to partition a drive is before it has been loaded with extra programs and data. Many newer Windows XP machines come with 3 partitions, 40% as C:/ for programs, 40% as D:/ for user files and 20% percent reserved for system restore files.

Tony mentioned a number of partitioning programs, some commercial, some shareware and some freeware. Although the commercial versions are usually more effective, some of the other choices are very capable. Many advertise non destructive partitioning but he warned that it is best to back everything up before starting. I did not catch the name of his preference but it's zero licensing cost is consistent with his give away goal.

Most partitioning software will also create a floppy disk to use for restarts but Tony prefers Master booter, a small but efficient program. After partitions are created, they must be formatted but he warned that Micro-soft's F disk instruction will only create one primary partition so he uses other methods. Tony also uses Ghost to create copies on floppy disks or CDs. He estimated that building the software library from scratch could take as much as 5 to 8 hours.

Members who participated in last fall's Build Your Own Computer project found that they spent about two hours assembling their computers plus four more loading the basic software. Only a large screen projection of the monitor could have improved this outstanding presentation.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub, Treasurer

Balance as of 10/10/07 . . . . $222.08

Expenses

Staples $97.45
St. Stephen's 60.00
Sally (ink) 35.63
Total $193.08

Income

Dues $285.00
Donations 16.00
Total $301.00
Balance as of 11/13/07 . . . . $330.00

New Members: Hanne Ramsager and Joshna Kulp.

Renewals: Robert Best, Floyd Matteson, Tom Tompson, Dudley Pease, Ron Thomas.

The Lighter Side

Service Call Not Included

When the Mars Pathfinder probe landed on the Red Planet, Pathfinder released the Sojourner Rover, a little laboratory on wheels. Sojourner cruised about the Martian surface performing experiments. Sojourner and Pathfinder communicated using two standard, off-the-shelf 9600 baud radio modems.

According to Jet Propulsion Laboratory program manager Donna Shirley, the modem manufacturer warned JPL that sending the modem to Mars would void the warrantee.