



THE WYSIWYG



\$3.00

April 2002

Volume 14, Issue 4

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

TUESDAY April 2
Main Meeting
7:30PM

Windows XP— presented
by Sonal Shah of
Microsoft

VISIT THE SHCC WEB PAGE:
[http://www.](http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org)
[SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org](http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org)

If your e-mail or mail address
changes, please e-mail: [secretary@](mailto:secretary@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org)
[SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org](mailto:secretary@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org)

IN THIS ISSUE:	
The President's Pen	1
About SHCC	2
Resource People	2
SIG Meetings	3
Club Business & Info	3-5
Door Prizes	4
Ask the Expert	4
Do You Know?	6
Toss Out That Shoebox	7
Ask Dr. DOS	8
WYSIWYG Web Watch	9
SHCC April Schedule	10

The President's Pen

by *Don VanSyckel*



This column is a collection of various items this month. First, be sure to attend this month's meeting on April 2nd. Ms. Sonal Shah of Microsoft will present Windows XP. One of the items that Windows XP is good at is handling digital photographs, arranging them, displaying them, and sharing them. Ms. Shah has presented to SHCC before and is an excellent presenter, so I believe you will enjoy the presentation in addition to finding it informative. Check the web site for a Microsoft flyer that will give you more info.

This past month I sat down to use the new toys. The new scanner I wrote about last month seems to work pretty well but I don't care for the PaperPort software package that came with it. I am attempting to use it to scan in the family photos which are mostly 4 X 6 prints from a 35 MM camera. The photos all seem to scan 'dark'. The PaperPort software (or at least the version supplied with the scanner) doesn't have adjustments so that the contrast and brightness can be set. The only control seem to be that once the photo is scanned you can review it and adjust it. This process places the current image in the middle of the screen with 8 'adjusted' images around it. It seems that on one side the images are darker and on the other side the images are lighter. I'm not exactly sure what changes from top to bottom, possibly

contrast. There's a couple of problems with this process. The first problem is that it is 'a process'. You have to do this to every photo scanned so it takes too long. I want to set and forget contrast and brightness. The second issue I have is that the 'adjusted' photos, which are brighter, appear to me to be more smeared with white instead of brightened. By smeared with white I mean something like what the bright sunshine does to your vision as it washes across your windshield. Last month I mentioned that this package will adjust and hold the image area. After reviewing the finished scanned photos on a different computer, I decided to trash what I had and try a different scanning package.

Windows XP has TWAIN scanner controls so it can use the scanner directly. The Windows XP control panel tool did a reasonable job. Once again, I felt the controls and ease of scanning just weren't quite there. This package is very usable for many or possibly most things, but when I tackle scanning hundreds of photos I want all the features. I want good versatile controls that are set and forget, set and remember scan area, and the ability to do one click scanning of photo after photo.

After reading the above, if you know of a scanning package you think I should

(Continued on page 6)

Guests and visitors are welcome. People may attend any of two consecutive months of club meetings before deciding to become a member or not. Membership includes admission to all SHCC functions and the newsletter. Membership is open to anyone. It is not limited to residents of Sterling Heights. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month, except for July and August. There is a monthly drawing for door prizes at the end of the meeting.

DUES: \$25/YEAR

CLUB ADDRESS: PO Box 385, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385
CLUB E-MAIL ADDRESS: Info@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org
CLUB WEB PAGE: http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

Resource People:

E-Mail Clients	-
Excel	Mike Greenen
Family Tree	Rick Schummer
FoxPro	Rick Schummer
Internet Explorer	-
MS Publisher	Rick Kucejko
Netscape	Don VanSyckel
Professional Write	Mike Greenen
Spreadsheets	Rick Schummer
Word	Rick Schummer

SHCC Coordinators:

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Net/Comm. SIG	Betty MacKenzie
Door prize	Micki Smith
Greeting table	Lindell Beck
Linux SIG	Ken Belbot
Local Web Sites	Jim Golec
Newsletter publisher	Rick Kucejko
Novice SIG	Don VanSyckel
PC SIG	Jack Vander-Schrier
Publicity	Patrick Little
Resource People	Mike Greenen
Vendor Press Rel.	Jim Waldrop
Web Page	Rick Kucejko

2002 SHCC Officers

V. President: Phil Reynaud
 Treasurer: Dick Morawski
 President: Don VanSyckel
 Secretary: Paul Baecker

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

APRIL 2002

- 2 - SHCC— Windows XP— presented by Sonal Shah of Microsoft
- 3 - COMP meeting
- 8 - Net/Comm SIG
- 14 - SEMCO meeting
- 15 - Novice SIG
- 18 - Linux SIG
- 22 - PC SIG

JUNE 2002

- 4 - SHCC— Mary Lou Metzger of the Public Library will present. Topic to be finalized.
- 5 - COMP meeting
- 9 - SEMCO meeting
- 10 - Net/Comm SIG
- 17 - Novice SIG
- 20 - Linux SIG
- 24 - PC SIG

MAY 2002

- 1 - COMP meeting
- 7 - SHCC - Member Jack Vander-Schrier will present. Topic to be finalized.
- 12 - SEMCO meeting
- 13 - Net/Comm SIG
- 16 - Linux SIG
- 20 - Novice SIG
- 22 - PC SIG

JULY 2002

- No main club meeting in July and August.
- 3 - COMP meeting
- 8 - Net/Comm SIG
- 14 - SEMCO meeting
- 15 - Novice SIG
- 18 - Linux SIG
- 29 - PC SIG

Special Interest Groups:

MS-DOS (Main)	IBM compatibles
Net/Com	Computers communicating with other computers
PC	Intermediate users discuss various topics
Novice	Those starting out
Linux	Learning a new operating system

Contact Information:

Paul Baecker	586-286-2314	excuser@excite.com
Lindell Beck	586-939-4278	ljaybeck@comcast.net
Ken Belbot	586-823-6280	kenger@voyager.net
Jim Golec	586-268-8621	jpgolec@comcast.net
Mike Greenen	586-979-8717	irish378@comcast.net
Rick Kucejko	248-879-6180	rick@kucejko.com
Patrick Little	586-264-1497	PBLittle@prodigy.net
Betty MacKenzie	586-254-0677	BMacKenz@tir.com
Dick Morawski	586-573-9648	RMorawski@aol.com
Phil Reynaud	586-268-6586	preynaud2@comcast.net
Rick Schummer	586-997-1451	rick@rickschummer.com
Micki Smith	586-791-9623	mickismi@earthlink.net
Don VanSyckel	586-731-9232	don@vansyckel.net
Jack Vander-Schrier	586-739-7720	jvanders@myself.com
Jim Waldrop	586-731-6481	jwaldrop@tir.com

Other Computer Clubs:

As a member of SHCC, you can attend meetings of other clubs where we have reciprocating membership agreements, at no charge.

Computer Club of Marysville and Port Huron (COMP)
 Time: 1st Wednesday, 7:00PM
 Place: Mackenzie Bldg, Room 201, St Clair Community College, Clara E McKenzie Library-Science Building, 323 Erie St.
 Port Huron, (810) 982-1187
 Web Page: http://www.bwcomp.org
 Reciprocating: Yes

South Eastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO)
 Time: 2nd Sunday at 1:30PM
 Place: Science & Engineering Building; Oakland University; 248-398-7560
 Web page: http://www.semco.org
 Reciprocating: Yes

The OPC (Older Persons Commission) Computer Club
 Time: Every Tuesday at 10:00
 Place: OPC in Rochester 248-656-1403.
 Web page: http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Village/1904/

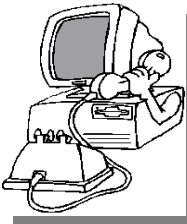
Newsletter submissions are due 10 days before the club meeting, but the earlier the better. They should be sent to :
 WYSIWYG Publisher
 5069 Fedora, Troy, MI 48098
 OR at the e-mail addresses: newsletter@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

© Unless stated otherwise, all materials contained in this newsletter are copyrighted by the Sterling Heights Computer Club. License is hereby granted to other clubs (non-profit) to reprint with credit.

The WYSIWYG was printed by STERLING PRINTING AND GRAPHICS, located at 37880 Van Dyke, Sterling Heights, MI

SIG Meetings

Net/Com SIG



The next meeting of the Internet/Communications (Net/Comm.) SIG is Monday, April 8, 2002, starting at 7:00PM, at the Macomb County Library.

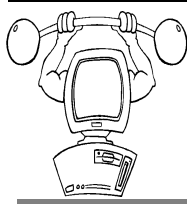
The SIG meeting days are 'generally' the second Monday of the month, depending on the meeting room availability.

Each month the members of the Net/Comm SIG discuss the Internet to help members of the SHCC learn more about this communications media.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Betty MacKenzie (numbers are on page 2), or check the club web site.



PC SIG



The next meeting of the PC SIG is Monday, April 22, 2002. The SIG meeting is 'generally' the fourth Monday of the month, depending on the meeting room availability.

Intermediate level topics are discussed, aimed at users with some knowledge of computers. Specific PC questions and problems encountered by members are also discussed.

Jack Vander-Shrier will answer questions as usual and presenting a topic to be determined. Check the club web page before the meeting for the topic. For more information about the SIG,

call or e-mail Jack Vander-Shrier (numbers are on page 2), or check the club web site.



Novice SIG



The next meeting of the Novice SIG is scheduled for Monday, April 15, 2002, starting at 7:00PM, at the Macomb County Library. This month the Novice SIG will have a guest presenter, Nancy Hartwig. She is a private tutor specializing in beginners and will be sharing her talent at the April Novice SIG meeting.

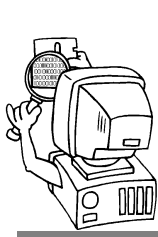
The SIG meeting days are 'generally' the third Monday of the month, depending on the meeting room availability.

All new members are invited to come and learn the DOS and Windows basics here. There is always a question and answer period at these meetings. The computer training sessions are free to club members, but members will be advised to purchase a book for \$14.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Don VanSyckel (numbers are on page 2), or check the club web site.



Linux SIG



This is a new SIG that is starting to meet. The first meeting was in January, 2002. The next meeting is Thursday evening, April 18.

The purpose of the SIG is to learn the Linux operating system. Meetings will discuss topics that are related to it.

The SIG will meet at Ken Belbot's house for now. The SIG meeting days are 'generally' the third Thursday of the month. Ken Belbot is the SIG coordinator. Call or e-mail Ken for directions or the latest information about the SIG (numbers are on page 2)



SHCC Emergency Shutdown

The Sterling Heights Computer Club will utilize radio station WWJ - 950 on the AM dial to notify members that a meeting is canceled because of bad weather or for other reasons. The announcement will happen along with the school closings and other events. Please remember to listen to the radio when there is bad weather.



Directions To The Macomb Library

The Macomb County Library is located at 16480 Hall Road, in Clinton Township, between Hayes and Garfield, close to the light at Garfield, on the south side of Hall Road. A large red sign says "Macomb County Library". The phone number is (586) 286-6660.



Electronic WYSIWYG

You have the choice of receiving either the paper or the electronic version of the WYSIWYG. Contact the SHCC secretary to request the electronic version, since it will only be sent to those requesting it.



SHCC Business

"Ask The Experts"

by Jerry Carson

Please send questions to "Ask the Experts" at the club's PO address, or e-mail your question directly to Jerry Carson at his e-mail address: jerrycarson@email.com



Readers,

There haven't been many questions lately. I hope this means that everyone's computers are working great! I thought I would try something new. Each month we don't have a question (and I have time), I'll try to give an overview on how some aspect of your computer system works. This month, I'll try programs. In the future, maybe device drivers or networking.

How do programs work?

Contrary to popular belief, computers are VERY stupid. But they are great at following directions. That's what a program is, a set of directions for the computer to follow. Most computers "know" how to perform about 200 instructions. Even these are usually variations of 8 basic steps. These are: ADD, SUBTRACT, MULTIPLY, DIVIDE, STORE, LOAD, JUMP, and COMPARE.

Some computers will know a few more steps, but these are the most common.

So a little program like:

PRINT "Hello World"

gets broken into a series of steps:

LOAD "H"

JUMP to output routine

LOAD "e"

JUMP to output routine

etc, etc

This is OK because the computer can perform nearly a billion of these simple steps every second. It's no won-

der that in a large program like a word processor or an operating system, there are a few (ok, sometimes a lot) of places where the computer is performing the wrongs steps. Remember, EVERYTHING has to be broken into one of the 8 basic steps. Programmers use compilers to translate programming languages that are a little more like English into these basic steps called INSTRUCTIONS, or MACHINE LANGUAGE.

Also, each manufacturer, and sometimes the same manufacturer, has a different set of INSTRUCTIONS for there particular computer. Some are compatible, like Intel and AMD, but others are not, like Apple and Intel. So programs that are translated into the MACHINE LANGUAGE for an Intel computer will probably run on and AMD but won't run on an Apple.

Next time I want to talk a little about a special program called the BASIC INPUT/OUTPUT SYSTEM or the BIOS. Every computer has one, isn't it time we find out what it does?

'Til next time,

The Expert



Door Prizes

The SHCC offers door prizes at most regularly scheduled club meetings. The door prizes for the April meeting will be supplied by our speaker from Microsoft.

The March winners Circle included:

Walter Jendhoff won a pack of CD's donated by Officemax on Gratiot.

Ralph Osinski won a Wing Corps Gold game

Mike Francis won a package of ink-jet paper donated by Officemax on Gratiot.

Ken Belbot won a copy of Freelance Graphics software



Club Record Changes

To update your e-mail address, phone number, etc., please e-mail the club secretary at: Secretary@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org. Using this address will provide the smoothest and quickest venue for any changes.



Advertising Space in the WYSIWYG

Pages, or fractions of pages are available for commercial advertisement for a reasonable advertising fee. If interested in details, contact the WYSIWYG publisher at the address shown on page 2.



Member Ads

Ads are available free to SHCC members, and are limited to computer related items for non-commercial purposes. Any ad shall be a maximum of twelve newsletter lines of text.



Selling Your Used Computer Equipment or Software

If you have some computer equipment or software to sell, you can either place a free add in the WYSIWYG, or bring the article to the club meeting. You can set up at the back of the room before the meeting, and sell your items to people at the meeting interested in buying them. Members are responsible for any damage to the table tops, so bring a pad to prevent damage.



Presenters Wanted

The officers invite any member to make a presentation at the main meeting.

If there is some software you have been using and think others may be interested as well, or there is a computer topic you would like to present to other members, please call

or e-mail Don VanSyckel. Making presentations is not that difficult. The hour goes by before you know it and there is always enough material to cover in a software package so that the hour is easy to fill.

If there is a topic you are interested in or something you would like demonstrated, please see any of the officers. They are always interested in what the members would like to see.



More Door Prizes

Have software you no longer use? It could make a good door prize for a fellow member. It would also give that member another good reason for being glad to have been at the club meeting. Contact Micki Smith, the door prize coordinator. (Information is on page 2), or just bring it.



Southfield Public Library Technical Programs

As part of National Library Week in April, the Southfield Public Library will present two free technical programs of possible interest to SHCC members.

Wednesday, April 17 at 7 PM:

Mike Wendland, the technology expert from the Free Press will discuss current trends and what we can expect for the future from the Internet.

Friday April 19 at 2 PM:

Members of the Southfield Public Library will provide an introduction to electronic books. Learn how to find and read books using your computer.



A Member's Response

Following is an email from one of our members, regarding a door prize:

What a wonderful surprise to win the first prize of a free class at Gateway in the drawing at our January meeting.

I took the class on February 12th at the Gateway store in Roseville. The evening instructor, Ms. S. Montpetit, was very knowledgeable and I really felt I learned a lot from the class.

A BIG THANK YOU to the club and Gateway management for making this possible.



Advertising Sign Hangers Wanted

The SHCC has been advertising to make people in the area aware of the club and what we are all about in hopes of building club membership. One way to get people to find out about us is to hang a flyer with tear-off phone numbers at the local retail stores like Meijers, Farmer Jacks and anywhere where a bulletin board is available.

If you are interested in helping out in this very important service please contact Pat Little (e-mail and phone number on page 2).



Attend A SIG

If you do not attend SIG meetings, you are missing out on important club benefits available to you. These small groups get into more detail and question and answer sessions than is possible at the main meeting.



The President's Pen

(Continued from page 1)

check out, let me know what it is.

The next item is Internet Service Providers (ISP). I have been pretty unhappy with having Comcast thrust upon me as an ISP. Regardless of how highly (or lowly) you rated Excite@Home, Comcast is clearly three or four notches below them. I have been compiling a list of features that I believe every ISP should be able to quote to you as a potential customer. In fact after a little more work on the list I intend to send it to our legislatures and ask that they consider introducing a consumer protection law which would require ISPs in the state of Michigan to provide the list of items and the answers to current and potential customers. This wouldn't require any particular level of service, just that the ISP tell you what you're going to

get (or not get) before you sign up. This would give the average consumer at least some chance of making an informed decision in choosing an ISP. In talking with several ISPs, not one of them could answer all the questions on the first call. On the other hand, none of them complained that any of the questions were unreasonable or unnecessary. I don't want to get into the contents of the questions this month, I will next month. Once you have an opportunity to review and comment on the questions, I will also be looking for support from the SHCC members for my proposal to our legislatures.

The officers have been discussing a couple of items which have been brought up to them. They are 1) more pages in the newsletter, WYSIWYG, and 2) refreshments, coffee, juice, and cookies, at the meetings. The officers thoughts can be summed up as follows:

The officers are neither encouraging nor discouraging these items, we are simply putting them on the table, but any increase in the WYSIWYG size or adding refreshment will take an increase in dues. Actually, if the WYSIWYG is made any larger it will need to be sent with an additional ounce of postage. This plus the printing cost will be \$3 or more per member per year. Refreshments have more flexibility but can range conservatively from \$2 to \$4 per member per year. So the choice is more goods and services for more cost or keep the status quo. I will mention the preceding at the April meeting but we'll hold off discussion until the May meeting because there should be quite a few extra people at this meeting since Microsoft is presenting.

See you April 2nd.



Do You Know?

by Bob Elgines, Colorado River Computer Club

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

Audio or sound problems?

Double click on the little Speaker Icon located on the right Task-Bar! Up pops an Audio Mixer allowing you to set all level inputs and the volume output. Make sure they are set between mid and full range. Some programs will set the Wave level to zero and all of sudden your sound doesn't work. Also you can go to Options, then Properties and select record. Here you can adjust record levels and what to record from such as CD, Mike, etc., by selecting which one is active.

How much Memory or RAM (Random Access Memory) is needed?

This depends on your OS (Operating System). See Chart below:

MS DOS	640 k to 1 MB	1980
WIN 2.0	2 MB to 4 MB	1990?
WIN 3.1	4MB to 8MB	1992
WIN 3.11	8MB to 16MB	1995
WIN 95A	8MB to 16MB	1995
WIN 95 B&C	16 to 32MB	1996&7
WIN 98	32MB to 64MB	1998
WIN 98 SE	64MB to 128MB	1999
WIN ME	128MB to 256MB	2000
WIN 2000	256MB and up!	2000

Is there something wrong with this picture. Yes, the new OS can do more, but less of the old routines. Also programmers have gotten very sloppy, and of course that is why more errors are generated. Their feelings are probably, "Well Memory is cheap, who cares!"

What speed CD-ROM should I buy?

Well this is a good question since most CD disks operate lower than 16X (1X

is the original speed of an Audio CD of 150 bits/sec of data transfer, therefore a 2X is 300 bits/sec, etc.). The biggest problem today is the delay in the Start Time in reading data from a CD. If you time it, most take 8 to 9 seconds to start. If it is longer than 10 seconds problems will occur with programs and windows trying to transfer data. It can destroy a CD-R disk while you are recording by letting your CD-R (Recorder) Read Buffer go dry (or empty). With an empty buffer your CD-R will quit writing and then you just produced a coaster (bad CD). So anything above a 16X doesn't mean much, just a sales thing, but you do need a Multi-Read CD-ROM or DVD that will read all types of CDs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs (Read/Write CD-Rs).

How do you read what version of DirectX that is installed in your sys-

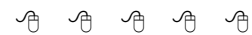
tem, and how much memory is on your video (or display) card used to drive your monitor?

These are some questions asked when installing certain types of programs. For Windows '98, go to Start/Run and type in DXDIAG, then click on OK. Here you can find out all kinds of information. Don't you wish you knew this before you purchased your machine? Click on the DISPLAY tab and read your Video Card memory. You should have at least 2 MB, some new programs require 4 MB minimum. Of course you can have more and what this means is larger blocks of video can be transferred with out interrupts, giving you better looking video output and larger screen operation.

How do I get rid of those icons on the right task bar? Most of these icons have a little program running in the background and use up valuable memory resources. The Speaker and Monitor icon do not use up any memory resources, but most of the others do. To get rid of them temporarily, do a right mouse click and select Close, but to get rid of them for good in Windows '98 go to Start then Run. Type in MSCONFIG and click on OK. Now go to the tab on top and click on Start-Up. This brings up a list of all those icons plus. Do not uncheck the following four items: **Taskbar Display Controls**, **ScanRegistry**, **SystemTray**, and **LoadPowerProfile**. After un-checking the ones you don't want to come up

on startup, click on Apply, then OK. You can restart windows now or wait until later. If you use a CD-R this is very important. Also if you are going to defrag your hard drive these items should be turned off (or closed) or the Defrag Program will keep starting over and over and never complete the job.

The author is Bob Elgines of the Colorado River Computer Club user group located in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. His e-mail is: elginesz@redrivernet.com



Toss Out That Shoebox

New Software Makes the Chore Lots Easier

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

It's the middle of March and I'm more than a month early on my taxes, a rare occurrence by anyone's standards, especially mine. Now don't get me wrong, it's got nothing to do with me. Heaven forbid I make a deadline. The credit belongs to my tax guy (yeah, that's how I refer to him. He's a guy, does my taxes, and has been a tax guy for years).

As tax guys go, he's even-tempered and patient. But every year he loses his professional cool at the site of me and my shoebox coming into his office. Last year he said, "Go buy a computer tax program, Bass" handing me back my shoebox. "Anything will do," he said, "just make sure it doesn't include a shoe box."

It turns out that once I started using a tax program, I actually enjoyed getting things organized. The process is simple: I just went through and answered the program's questions. Some programs, such as TurboTax, allowed me to fill in a screen that is a pretty accu-

rate rendition of an IRS tax form (real enough to cause some anxiety).

Other programs are less realistic – you answer questions on screen and move from field to field. And if you're using an accounting program, there's a good chance you can export data to a variety of tax programs. For example, Intuit's TaxCut accepts data from Quicken. By the way, most tax programs will print out IRS approved forms on a laser printer and some even include software for electronic filing.

Give Me Some Help

Every program I tried offered extensive help so even inexperienced users can get some on-line reassurance. At any point you can stop the process and get advice. TurboTax's chatty, comfortable tone reminded me of my tax guy (it obviously didn't see the shoe box on my desk). All tax programs let me play "what-if" scenarios to my heart's content. I was able to see the effect of, say, buying a new car, or adding a new deduction to the family. And TurboTax

compares your deductions to the national standard to make sure you're not out of line, saving you a potential audit.

Of course, there's a downside to doing my taxes on my own. Every so often I'd get a message suggesting a talk with my, uh, tax guy. I ran into one snag when I tried to figure out if I was able to deduct a unique retirement fund from my state taxes. And here's where I get a little squirrely with tax programs because the answer was not forthcoming. My solution? Find a tax preparer who's willing to answer your questions and double-check your computer generated return.

Here are some recommendations if you decide to use tax preparation software:

** If you have a simple return, don't hesitate to do-it-yourself. Your return will be more accurate, you might have fun, and you'll likely save some money.

** If you have a complicated return, and someone does your taxes, try a tax program and compare the results. Do that for a year or two and if you don't see much of a difference, consider working exclusively with the software.

**To get the best price on tax prepara-

tion software, compare the prices of local discount stores to mail order companies. Many mail order firms bundle the federal and state versions for a lower price.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.



Ask Dr. DOS

The Doctor of Computing is available to answer all of your computing questions.

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs.

Dear Dr. DOS:

I'm thinking about switching over to Unix, XENIX, Linux, or maybe even Zipnix from Unysis. Any idea which is faster, niftier, or slicker?

-Power User, Los Altos

Dear P.U.

It looks like you're stuck in the Power User's Credo of, "if it's not broken, fix it." A workshop at Fall Comdex convinced the Dr. DOS staff that 1) your wife has no idea how much you're really spending on computer equipment, and 2) making your computer go faster, slicker and niftier leads to severe emotional fragmentation. Stick with Windows XP.

Dear Dr. DOS:

I'm one of the holdout still using floppy disks for storage of critical data files and for emergency boot disks. There are times when I seem to have to wait forever for my floppy disks to format. Any ideas for speeding things up?

-Slowpoke, Cincinnati

Dear Slowpoke:

Floppies are notoriously slow, especially compared to other external storage devices. The reason is the material

floppy disks are coated with tends to catch the arm of the disk drive. Floppy manufacturers have known how to solve the problem since the early eighties and haven't because of the cost. Dr. DOS suggests a light coating of PAM (hold six inches from the disk and spray for no more than three seconds) to the upper portion of the disk. We recommend using only the best quality disks and never try this with Imega Zip or JAZZ disks. Be careful-one dimwit tried using SPAM either due to an existential disorder or a typo and caused his disk drive to crave white bread.

Dear Dr. DOS:

Every time I sit down at the computer I feel a great sense of discomfort as the time seems to speed by very quickly. Just what is happening?

-Whoosh, New York

Dear Whoosh:

Computer time is different from other time. Watches, clocks, and other time pieces seem to become inaccurate when you're at the computer. Every five minutes of computer time is equal to what seems equal to one hour of my wife's time, at least from her perception. Actually, for every five minutes at the computer, only 25 minutes goes by on the clock.

It's a simple recalculation based in the number of time slices your computer uses. For example, when we first

started using PCs, they used an 8088 processor with an internal clock that ticks about 18 times a second (Mean Greenwich Time). This time factor (8088s only) pushes time ahead 25 minutes for each 5 minutes of real or actual time. The ratio of 5:1 is obvious (except to you, Whoosh).

An ancient AT class machine (80286) pushes the time factor to 7:1; 80486 machines provide an even faster 11:1 ratio. Nowadays, a 1.5GHz class machine pushes the envelope at 45:1

Experiment with these time factors in conjunction with your spouse. "Dinner is ready," she'll say. "Five minutes, Honey," you respond. Take careful note at the strong relationship between the time factor of your older PII and, say, a newer PIII, and the length, depth and substance of your marriage.

This is to inform you that this column is allegedly humorous and we strongly urge you to ignore the advice contained within, especially anything suggesting spraying substances into or around your PC or its peripherals.

- Bass's attorney, Bernie Dewey, Cheatum, and Howe, Attorneys

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Write to him at steve_bass@pcworld.com.



WYSIWYG WEB WATCH (www)

by Paul Baecker

This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing and free content, with no overbearing pressure to purchase anything. If you have a particularly enjoyable or helpful (or just plain useless) site which you would like to share with the membership, e-mail the site address, with a brief site description, for a future WYSIWYG issue, to excuser@excite.com. Additionally, send in a website category in which you are particularly interested, and all eyes will watch out for related sites. Check the SHCC web site (Web Page Reviews) for past previous gems.



Just purchased a new audio component (DVD, receiver, speakers...), but need help connecting it to your audio/video system? Click on 'Hook It Up' for help. Select 'Help Me Choose' for a Hifi library and dictionary, as well as help with new component selection. <http://www.hifi.com>

The next time you receive an email describing a new virus, you can check here on its validity. This site is not sponsored by anti-virus software companies. <http://vmyths.com>

This site provides a reasonably comprehensive list of things to do (shopping/dining/entertainment) for many cities (even small towns), including movie schedules within a twenty-five mile radius. <http://mycity.com>

This is a portal which supplies secure, easy access to government services and benefits for seniors, allowing them to conduct government business

electronically. Health, retirement, education, consumer protection, tax assistance, travel and leisure, etc. <http://seniors.gov/>

This site labels itself as the ultimate resource for elder abuse law, which protects seniors from physical, emotional, and financial abuse. <http://elderabuselaw.com/>

Click on 'How-To' or 'Articles' for numerous well-written tutorials (with diagrams and illustrations) of house and garden repair projects from replacing switches and removing stains to laying a brick path and building a fence. <http://www.cornerhardware.com>

The Puzzle Factory will help you pass the time with a variety of jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, word searches, mazes, sliders and tangrams. Kid-friendly games are here also. No pencils required! <http://puzzlefactory.com>

Discover historical events for any day of the year. Enter a date and choose a category (such as Automotive, Crime, Old West, Technology, and many others) for a short history lesson. <http://www.historychannel.com/tdih/index.html>

Think of a TV show and see if this site can guess it through simple yes/no questions. <http://www.guessthegame.com/>

Old car buffs (young car buffs, too) will enjoy this photo collection of 'Woodies', those old wood-sided vehicles of the past. Click on 'Gallery' for Woodie trucks and busses, phantom Woodies, international Woodies, and much more. Check out the restoration process in Shop Talk, and upcoming national exhibition events in Calendar.

You could get lost in here! <http://www.oldwoodies.com>

Windows not cooperating with you again??? Don't waste your time on hold with its maker. This Windows Support Center site ought to be able to help you out of your latest MS desktop system jam. Articles, FAQs, How-To's, registry patches, knowledge base links, and recommended freeware utilities. A gem of a site.

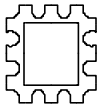
<http://www.aumha.org/>

How do you stick this to that? This site will help you determine how best to join any two of eleven listed materials to each other. <http://thistothat.com/>

Head for MSN's Tips and Tricks site for professional suggestions on taking film and digital photos, scanning photos and slides, and sharing photos on-line and via e-mail, along with help on choosing and using a digital camera, and a photo gallery. <http://photos.msn.com/editorial/editorialstart.aspx>

Rearview Mirror is a Detroit News site full of old newspaper articles regarding southeast Michigan history, with photos galore. Everything from Sunday Drives to the Race Riots of '43. Don't miss the 'Click for More Photos' buttons! (The second site lists all the articles in the archives.) <http://pc99.detnews.com/history/>
<http://pc99.detnews.com/history/archive.hbs>

A true appreciation for these 'Helpers of Humanity' can be gained from a visit to this site, the Traffic Cone Preservation Society. Click on the "Field Guide" for a look at this creature's various subspecies. <http://animation.filmtv.ucla.edu/students/awinfrey/coneindex.htm>



STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

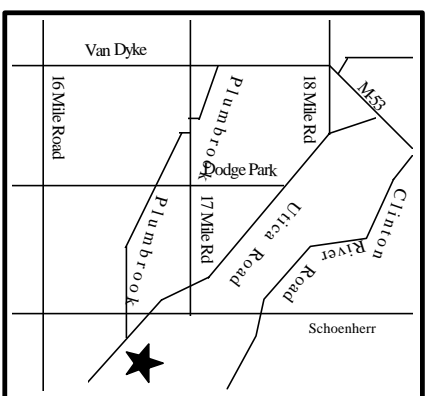


APRIL AT SHCC:

TUESDAY APRIL 2

**Main Meeting.
7:30PM at
Carpattia Club.
38000 Utica Road
Sterling Heights**

**Windows XP—pre-
sented by Sonal
Shah of Microsoft**



SIGS

MONDAY April 8

Net/Com SIG 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

MONDAY April 15

Novice SIG 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

THURSDAY April 18

LINUX SIG 7:00PM at Ken Belbot's home.

MONDAY April 22

PC SIG 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

May 7: Member Jack Vander-Schrier will present. Topic pending.

June 4: Mary Lou Metzger of the Public Library to present. Topic pending.