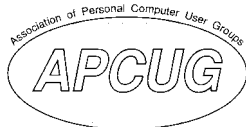




THE WYSIWYG



\$3.00

December 2004

Volume 16, Issue 10

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

TUESDAY Dec 7
Main Meeting
7:30 PM

Smart Computing Magazine and some other magazines, by Jen Clausen

If your e-mail or mail address changes, please e-mail: secretary@SterlingHeights-ComputerClub.org

A person to fill the position of Program Coordinator is being sought. If interested in this very important function, contact Don VanSyckel.

The President's Pen

by Don VanSyckel



This is a big month at SHCC. We are pleased to have Jen Clausen of Smart Computing Magazine present this month. Jen's presentation promises to be interesting to all so make sure to be at this month's meeting.

On other topics, I'd like to mention two things this month. One is voice over IP and the other is debit versus credit cards. While these subjects are not exactly personal computer related and they don't relate to each other they are both technical and relate to many PC users.

Internet Protocol (IP) is the protocol or method used to move data across the Internet. Voice over IP is a technology to convert voice into data packets, transmit these data packets across the Internet using IP, convert the data packets to voice, and put the voice on local phone lines at the other end to complete the call. Recently a couple of people told me about their experience with VOIP and I thought I'd give it a try. Since then I've seen ads in the local paper for two other vendors offering similar services. None of these companies are local since they all do business on the national level.

While the specific features you get with VOIP vary from company to company, generally you should get:

- 1) Unlimited calling in the US
- 2) Voice mail
- 3) Caller ID
- 4) Call forwarding
- 5) Three way calling
- 6) Keep your current phone number
- 7) Ability to add other phone numbers

I believe items #1 to 5 are self explanatory. #6, keep your current phone number, is the ability to have your phone number transferred from what ever phone company you currently have service with to the company you use for VOIP. This can be convenient when done but the phone company you currently have tends to drag their feet a bit in the transfer process.

#7, ability to add other phone numbers, refers to the ability for one VOIP connection to have more than one phone number attached to it. For instance many retired people live in Michigan during part of the year and Florida or Arizona during part of the year. You can have a Michigan phone number and a Florida phone number

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Guests and visitors are welcome. People can attend any SHCC meetings during two consecutive months before deciding to become a member or not. Meetings include the main meeting and SIGs. July and August don't count since there is no main meeting. Membership includes admission to all SHCC functions and the newsletter. Membership is open to anyone. It is not limited to the residents of Sterling Heights.

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	Open
Greeting table	Lindell Beck
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

2004 SHCC Officers

President: Don VanSyckel
 Secretary: Pat Little
 V. President: Jerry Hess
 Treasurer: Ed Trombley

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

DECEMBER 2004

- 7 - SHCC—Smart Computing Magazine by Jen Clausen
- 8 - COMP meeting
- 8 - PC SIG— rescheduled from November
- 14 - SEMCO meeting
- 13 - Net/Comm SIG
- 21 - Novice SIG
- 28 - PC SIG

JANUARY 2005

- 4 - SHCC—Anti-Virus by Nick George of Disk-N-Dat
- 5 - COMP meeting
- 9 - SEMCO meeting
- 10 - Net/Comm SIG
- 17 - Novice SIG
- 26 - PC SIG

FEBRUARY 2005

- 1 - SHCC - FileMaker Pro 7 by Jonathan Stars of Data Design Pro
- 2 - COMP meeting
- 13 - SEMCO meeting
- 14 - Net/Comm SIG
- 21 - Novice SIG
- 3/2 - PC SIG

MARCH 2005

- 1 - SHCC - Main Meeting
- 2 - COMP meeting
- 13 - SEMCO meeting
- 14 - Net/Comm SIG
- 21 - Novice SIG
- 30 - 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

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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/
 No cost to join or attend meetings.
 Reciprocating: No

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

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SIG Meetings

Net/Com SIG



The next meeting of the Internet/Communications (Net/Comm.) SIG will be Monday, December 13, 2004, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library. The meeting topic will be "More New and Interesting Web Sites". The SIG meeting days are generally the second Monday of the month.

Each month the members of the Net/Comm SIG discusses the Internet to help members of the SHCC learn more about the Internet.

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



Novice SIG



The next meeting of the Novice SIG will be Tuesday, December 21, 2004, starting at 7:00 PM at the Macomb County Library.

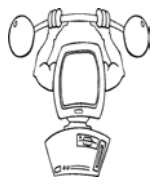
The Novice SIG has started over. We have two suggested books which will be considered to use in the SIG as a guide and reference. This is a good time to start in the Novice SIG to get going at the beginning. We will be using WinXP as the version of Windows to focus on. Since we will be dealing with novice topics, virtually all of the information will be directly usable by those using other versions of Win-

dows, Win98, WinME, and Win2000. The SIG meetings are generally the third Monday of the month; check the web site for actual date.

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



PC SIG



The December meeting of the PC SIG is Tuesday, December 28, 2004, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

The November SIG meeting was rescheduled to Wednesday, December 8. The meeting topic will be "How To Back Up Your Computer To CD".

The SIG meeting is generally the last Wednesday of the month.

Intermediate level topics are discussed, aimed at users with some knowledge of computers. During this meeting, questions and answers regarding your computer will be discussed.

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



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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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 the Expert at the club e-mail address: AskTheExpert@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org.

Q: Dear Expert,

Adware has been detected on our computer. Here’s how Symantec describes it: “Adware.Hotbar adds graphical skins to Internet Explorer, Microsoft Outlook, and Outlook Express toolbars and adds its own toolbar and search button. Adware.Hotbar can send the browsing history to various servers, along with a unique ID to track browsing habits.”

I’ve seen a huge increase in junk mail in the last week – 15-20 per day instead of 1 or 2. I don’t know if this has anything to do with it or not. Should we uninstall this adware or is it most likely not causing the problems?

Swamped.

A: Dear Swamped,

I have tried Hotbar and I’ve eventually uninstalled it. In theory, Hotbar does not send out your email address, so it shouldn’t be guilty of the increase in junk mail. However, if this increase happened around the same time you installed Hotbar, then this is circumstantial evidence that it may be responsible. I did notice an increase in pop-ups and some system slow-down using Hotbar. Most security programs will recommend removing it. I decided that I just didn’t get enough from it to justify the annoyance and possible risk. I can recommend the Google toolbar if you’re looking for a toolbar/search so-

lution. It doesn’t do the nice skins that Hotbar does, but then it doesn’t seem to affect my system like I saw with Hotbar either. Ultimately, it’s your choice, but I would be looking for alternatives.

I did notice that eliminating Hotbar did NOT reduce the amount of spam I received. It seems like once your email address is out there you’re caught. Here’s a few tips to help keep your email address secret. 1) Don’t publish it. Don’t put your email address on your web page. Put a picture of it there instead. Also, there are free services that can encrypt your email address and give you the code to put on your web site instead. 2) Check the privacy policy on any web site before you use your email address. If they allow you to opt-out of advertising, do it! 3) Be careful when forwarding jokes, lists, etc. Many times these items eventually get out to some who sells this long list of addresses to a spammer. If you do forward, send it to a non-existent email address and use the bcc: to add the real addresses. This also means the others won’t know who it went out to. 4) If all else fails, change your email address. Most ISPs allow you to have several. Some will assign you another if you tell them why you want to change. Best to keep both for a while until everyone that should know your new address does. Then remove the old one.

Good luck and let me know how it turns out.



VISIT THE SHCC WEB PAGE:
<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>

Door Prizes

The SHCC offers door prizes at most regularly scheduled club meetings. The door prizes for the December meeting were not known at the time of publication, but will include a packet of Smart Computer Goodies for everyone present.

November’s coveted winner’s circle included:

Sue Sullivan, Frank Podolski, Nina Jarboe, and Edward Sroka won Magazines

Carl Witkowski won Windows 2000 Pro

Bruce Honeck won Drive Image

Jerry Hess -won a Computer Game

Robert J. Klimas won User Guide

Rene Ricafranca won MicroSoft Excel, Word

David Livingston won 'How to Use the Internet'



Selling Your Used Computer Equipment or Software

If you have some computer equipment or software to sell, you can either place a free ad 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.



The President's Pen

(Continued from page 1)

both directed to your VOIP and they are each local numbers to their respective locations.

So how do you hook up VOIP? First you must have a high speed always on Internet connection. This leaves out certain DSL connections from phone companies when they force you to have phone service with them or they won't sell you DSL. Then you disconnect your phones from the phone company. Generally there is a box outside with a modular jack and plug in it and you simply remove the plug from the jack. Next you take the VOIP box, about the size of an answering machine, and connect it to your Internet connection and to your phones. To make a call you simply use the phone as normal. The only difference is you must include the area code with every call even local ones. This is probably coming to be a requirement soon for all phones anyway the way area codes are going and the fact that area codes are now being 'overlaid' instead of split. So now my Internet connection, cable TV service, and ALL phone charges total \$80 per month. Just a short time ago I was paying \$35 for cable, \$50 for Internet, and \$35 for phone for a total of \$120 per month plus long distance.

The service I signed up for is Packet 8. Through the end of the year you can purchase a package from Tiger Direct on the Internet for \$60. When you sign up with Packet 8 for the service, you get a \$60 rebate making the hardware free and two months of service free, which is about how long it takes to transfer your current number if you want it transferred. The monthly charge is just over \$20 with the taxes with no contract. If anyone has questions bring them to the December meeting or contact me.

The other subject is the use of debit cards versus credit cards. When you use a debit card the money is taken

from your account as soon as the bank gets the 'charge' slip. The money is gone; you have no recourse. With a credit card the charge goes against your account and you have the ability to protest invalid and fraudulent charges. It is much much safer to use credit cards than debit cards. In fact it can even be dangerous to carry a debit card even if you don't use it. I recently heard a story about a woman who had a debit card stolen from her purse and didn't realize it was gone until contacted by her bank about being

over drawn. Then the story came out but the account was empty. I intend to contact my bank this week about getting an ATM card which can not be used as a debit card. If they don't offer this I will be looking for a new bank which does. Anyone have any suggestions?

Come to the December meeting; the Smart Computing presentation will be a good one. See you Tuesday.



Can You E-mail Your Doctor? Should You?

*by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2, and columnist for AARP's
Computer and Technology Web Site*

We rarely think about how the Internet and email have changed society and our lives in just ten years. For finding information, conducting personal and professional affairs, and simply doing business, it's hard to remember or imagine doing without them. No other technology achieved such wide use so fast.

But email acceptance and use isn't universal, and some areas are slower to adopt it. While I routinely exchange email with my stock broker, accountant, car dealer, veterinarian, realtor, and nearly all my service providers, my healthcare professionals are much less uniformly available electronically. In fact, there's no uniformity of opinion among patients, doctors, ethicists, insurance companies, the medical establishment, and government about how this new-fangled technology should be handled and regulated.

My primary care doc, an internist emphasizing cardiac health, gave me the idea for this article by being available via email starting about two years ago. He finds it ~ as I do! ~ great for direct, simple communications, and reports that email decreases phone calls and

phone tag, achieving office efficiency and economy. I've asked simple questions such as how often it's advisable to give blood and what kind of blood pressure monitor to purchase. He makes email contact available to all his patients with the understanding that if specific therapies are required after email contact, an office visit is needed. Before any emailing, he ensures that a patient is using a private home computer, rather than a workplace system. And he considers email conversations to be informal, not necessarily entering patient records, with any recommendations requiring specific therapeutic intervention warranting a carefully documented office visit.

It's clear that there aren't yet standards for high-tech medical communications, and healthcare providers are individually exploring and defining opportunities. Some doctors use email for administrative matters only, such as booking appointments and handling prescription refills. Some respond to email with telephone calls. Still others won't accept or send any patient email, citing concerns about privacy and security, or email's cold ("low touch") nature as inappropriate for something as important and personal as healthcare.

There are valid technical concerns: email is not private or secure, or even completely reliable: email can be forged, sender and receiver are usually not authenticated, email containing a warning or diagnosis can be delayed in transit, etc. And risks such as incomplete record keeping, misunderstandings and miscommunications ~ even a patient denying that a note was received ~ add to the already sadly high risk of litigation.

An ethics expert draws a sharp line, commenting that he's "been around this issue in several professional settings". He continued, "The legal profession has OKed email for confidential communications IF the client requests/approves it and if the system is secure. Work computers are often monitored, so it is not reasonable to regard them as secure. I'd say the same standards apply to doctors." And he identifies an additional risk; "Unlike with lawyers, simply communicating with an oncologist (for example) gives information with confidential overtones." He suggests that doctors avoid email communications with patients, patients avoid communication with doctors from work, and patients avoid research from work on medical Web sites.

The American Medical Association (AMA) offers resources describing advantages and risks of healthcare-related email. Guidelines for Physician-Patient Electronic Communications <<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2386.html>> notes that "Email has taken on increased significance as a mode of communication that is readily available to patients and health care professionals" and strongly recommends that email must never replace crucial interpersonal contacts. And it provides a number of clear/specific and mutual guidelines for patient/doctor email.

Ethical Guidelines for Use of

Electronic Mail Between Patients and Physicians <<http://www.bioethics.net/journal/infocus.php?vol=3&issue=3&articleID=120>> includes a longer discussion of email issues, including a brief history of doctor/patient communications from the 17th century. Perhaps its most crucial recommendation is that email "should not be used to establish a patient-physician relationship, but rather to supplement personal encounters".

The government endorses use of email; William Pierce, Deputy Assistant Secretary of HHS, said that the HHS Secretary encourages use of information technology for efficiency and to improve health. He notes that under HIPAA's new healthcare privacy rules, use of email is permitted, with informed patient consent and control, and responsible patient usage.

Another issue may be more challenging than deciding whether and how to email: working out a way for doctors to be paid for added value services such as access-by-email. In the era of managed care, my doc notes, many patients feel entitled to administrative services ~ FAXing referrals and prescription refills, copying records, filling out forms for handicapped parking and travel insurance, etc. ~ because they have health insurance. Since insurers don't presently reimburse those services, some medical practices have tried to establish fee structures to cover their costs. Of course, new fees aren't popular with patients or insurance companies. So a new administrative services package may emerge, including emailing, FAXing, form completion, etc. for a modest annual fee. And the AMA has defined temporary codes "for identifying emerging technology, services and procedures", such as online medical evaluations.

A middle ground is outlined by Jim Harper, editor of Privacilla.org, a

Web-based project that seeks to capture "privacy" as a public policy issue: "A physician should strike the balance carefully between the security risks involved in emailing and the importance of quick, effective communication. Email is fine for ordinary treatment information about conditions that carry no stigma. More sensitive conditions, or diagnoses and so on, probably deserve better than e-mail". He notes that the relatively new HIPAA law may have lawyers advising doctors to avoid using email with patients. If this happens, he feels that this "probably needlessly degrades communication with patients who would benefit from getting written information quickly".

And a bit of practical reality comes from my doc, who notes that "This is the 21st century. If patients want my time (which unfortunately is finite) they have to get it any way that works for me". So taking appropriate cautions and precautions, requiring informed patient consent regarding email's tradeoffs and limitations, and recognizing the potential need to pay for the enhanced service, email complements other technologies ~ telegraph, telephone, and FAX. These, after all, were new in their time and not accepted without reservations by both patients and physicians, but are now routine rather than threatening.

This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <www.aarp.org/computers>. (c) AARP 2004. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

10 Commandments For Happy Windows Computer Owing

by Robert Spotswood, Hal-PC, Houston, Texas

How to reduce your computer headaches

I work as a computer tech and I see lots of different computer problems. But I see certain problems again and again.

While it means more business for me, lots of those problems could be easily avoided saving my customers money and aggravation. Here are ten commandments, which, if followed, will greatly reduce your computer headaches.

I. Use a Virus Scanner

Get one and keep it up to date. The brand doesn't make a big difference. Keeping it up to date does! A virus scanner that has not been updated recently (recently being about 1 or 2 days), is only slightly better than no virus scanner at all.

Keep the virus scanner active and do regular scans of your system. Trying to install a virus scanner after you already have a virus infection usually isn't going to do any good. If the viruses are active, most will attack any virus scanner and prevent it from working or installing properly. The only way to stop this is to have an up-to-date virus scanner active when the virus first tries to infect you.

II. Protect Yourself from Spyware

Viruses aren't your only threat. Spyware is another, and virus scanners do almost nothing about it, although that is just starting to change. Spyware, aside from invading your privacy, can crash your computer, make it run slow, hijack your browser (especially Internet Explorer), annoy you with pop-up ads, and download porn. These things have cost people jobs and ruined relationships (see www.wired.com/news/infrastructure/0,1377,63391,00.html).

Spyware can come in with other "free" programs, or can be installed silently if you use Internet Explorer (termed drive-by-downloading). If a window pops up asking to install software, say no, unless you were expecting it.

While not all "free" programs are bad, avoid "free" programs without checking them out first. As a general rule, open source programs are unlikely to have spyware.

Don't use Internet Explorer (use Mozilla or Opera instead), and check for "little pests" regularly. Spybot and Ad-aware are two free and good programs for dealing with spyware. Spyware "experts" tend to prefer Spybot over Ad-aware, but both are good programs. Prevention is the best medicine however.

III. Don't Open Strange Emails

Never, ever open or respond to an email that in any way seems suspicious. Don't even preview it, especially in Outlook or Outlook Express. It doesn't matter who it appears to come from. That can be faked unless you use digital signatures correctly, and most modern worms do fake the sender.

Don't rely on your virus scanner to protect you either. Email viruses can spread around the world in minutes. Your virus scanner will be at least a day behind the most current threat.

No legitimate company will want you to open an attachment or enter your user info in a form from an out-of-the-blue email. Companies also do not send patches (see commandment VIII) via email. Should you actually find a company that does these things, find somebody else to do business with. Your information is not safe with them.

If at all possible, do not use a Microsoft email client. Use a Mozilla or Opera based program (among others) instead. Microsoft's poor security record AND actively being targeted make for a lousy combination.

IV. Never Respond to Spam

Never respond to or buy something from an email that you even THINK is spam or unsolicited, even if it's something you are interested in. Spammers spam because it is profitable. It is profitable because enough people buy or respond. Buying anything from or responding to spam is just throwing gasoline on a fire. In addition, often, the spam involves something either fraudulent or illegal. If it's something you are still interested in, do a web search, and buy from there.

Always be careful of where you put your email address. Putting your email address in some form (paper or electronic) is one way the spammers get your address, especially contest promotions, i.e. fill out a form for a chance to win a prize and the form asks for an email address among other things. Posting your address on a website or Usenet are two other ways spammers get your address.

V. Perform Regular Backups

Sooner or later, it's going to happen. Something important gets deleted. It doesn't matter if it was a virus, equipment failure, or just not paying enough attention when hitting the delete key. This includes not just erasing files, but overwriting data. The recycle bin or undelete programs can't help you then. Doing proper backups are your best, and cheapest defense against these disasters.

Take care of your backup media. Don't leave CD's lying in the sun or tapes near magnets. Finally, don't forget to

test the restore process once in a while! A backup you can't restore is worthless, and the practice you get in restoring will help you avoid mistakes and panic when the time comes to do it for real.

VI. Help the Tech

Having computer problems is normal. Sooner or later it happens to everyone. When it is time to seek help, don't lie. Chances are the tech will see through the lie very quickly, and even if he doesn't, it only makes it harder for him to help you. Be as specific as you can. Write down the exact error message. Tell him anything you think might be important. He can't read minds and he wasn't there when you did ___ (fill in the blank).

Don't "clean up" your computer before you bring in (or take the computer to) the tech. This can, in rare cases, disguise the cause of the problem.

If getting phone support, be in front of your computer, have it turned on and booted up, and have the application(s) already open (if appropriate). Many phone support techs are rated (and promoted or fired) based on how many calls per hour they answer, not on whether they actually help you. Take too long and you may find your problem is "We do not support that. Good-bye." Be patient and describe everything you see. Phone support is one of the hardest types of support to do.

Finally, swearing like a sailor or threatening the tech will not get your system fixed any faster or cheaper. In fact, the reverse may happen.

VII. Get Some Computer Training

You don't have to be a mechanic to drive a car, but you still have to have training. No one is born knowing how to drive, and no one is born knowing how to use computers. Know the basic terminology, specs, and workings of your computer. This knowledge can

reduce your need for professional help (aka the tech) and make working the tech more productive when you do need it.

Think of the training as an investment in yourself. Once you learn how to use your computer your [computer] life will become more productive and enjoyable. HAL-PC offers a variety of free or low cost training. Take advantage of it.

VIII. Apply Patches Regularly

Programming is easy, but creating perfectly secure programs is very hard to impossible. Mistakes happen. When they do, fixes (often called patches) are issued. While some of these patches may cause problems, it is usually better to install the patch than not.

Free and open source software usually just issues new versions rather than patches, so don't forget to upgrade. There are mailing lists you can sign up for to tell you when new patches and new versions are issued.

Using Windows update regularly is a good way to stay current with your patches. Be warned, however, that Microsoft does not always issue patches in a timely manner, and neither do some other software companies. You can't patch without a patch.

Sometimes, a patch will not fix the problem it was intended to fix or may even open up other security holes. Do not make the mistake of thinking that just because you are current on all your patches that you are safe. You're not!

IX. Pay Attention to Your Computer's Security

The wrong types of people are interested in your computer, even if you are just a home user on dial-up. Even if you don't have any valuable data (unlikely; credit card info, banking info, perhaps work info are just a few examples), your machine could be used

as a source of spam, used to host illegal materials, or even as a launch pad for attacks on other systems.

A dial-up user, or someone with a connected modem, could be disconnected from his ISP (Internet Service Provider) and silently reconnected to another overseas. The next phone bill will be quite shocking.

While there is no product that can make your computer secure, a firewall and virus scanner are a good start. Running more than one firewall and one virus scanner at the same time is usually a bad idea. It does little to increase your security, while greatly increasing problems you will have.

X. Give Your Computer Regular Maintenance

Computers, like all things, work better if they receive occasion maintenance. A scandisk and defrag every month will help keep your computer running smoothly. Dusting inside your computer every so often is also a good idea. Seek professional help if you are unsure how to do this. Smaller computer shops will often teach you how to do this yourself for free or a small fee or you could make a friend at HAL-PC. Finally, your computer case is not a refrigerator door. Don't stick magnets on it.

Robert Spotswood, a HAL-PC member, is active in the Linux SIG and a freelance computer professional. He can be reached at robert@spotswood-computer.net.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



WYSIWYG WEB WATCH (www)

By Paul Baecker

webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org



This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing and free content, with no overbearing pressure to purchase any-

thing. Send your favorite (entertaining, helpful or just plain useless) sites, with brief site descriptions, to the e-address noted above, for inclusion in a future WYSIWYG issue. Also check the SHCC web site (“Web Page Reviews”) for previous gems.

Create your own customized WinXP installation CD, complete with updated patches and updates, for quicker reinstalls.

<http://unattended.msfm.org>

Malware countermeasures ~ links to popular anti-malware programs and easy-to-understand tutorials.

<http://groups.msn.com/TeMercInternetSecuritySite/malwarecountermeasures.msnw>

Hundreds of high-quality pics ~ NASA, animals, vehicles, scenery, nature, more.

<http://dannysdesktop.themesunlimited.com>

Herbal Safety site clarifies benefits of herbs and warns of dangers associated with their use.

<http://www.herbalsafety.utep.edu>

Disco Sauna – get up and boogie!

<http://discosquirrels.com>

Dozens of sound bites from classic cartoon character performances.

<http://records.goldenagecartoons.com>

For automotive fans, click on the “magazine” option here for hundreds of ‘car of the week’, ‘news’ and ‘features’ articles/photos of European cars.

<http://www.classicdriver.com>

mp3DirectCut – a free tool for editing mpeg audio directly. Remove parts, change volume, split files or copy regions to new files.

<http://www.mpsch3.de>

Photographic history of the US Navy.

<http://www.navysource.org/archives/02/76.htm>

SUN’s free OpenOffice.org productivity suite, a collection of desktop applications compatible with MSOffice, is here, with user guides.

<http://www.openoffice.org>

Collection of free colorful screensavers, and a few image galleries.

<http://www.graphicsblandishment.com>

On-line tests check your PC for security risks, Windows config issues, and performance problems. Clear, detailed analysis of your PC’s health and performance. A great opportunity for a free PC check-up!

<http://www.pcpitstop.com>

Search out and connect with classmates from your educational youth.

<http://www.classmates.com>

One person’s stuff is another’s treasure. Pick up or give away free stuff here.

<http://www.freecycle.org>

This site reviews, rates, and categorizes shareware and freeware for downloading.

<http://www.snapfiles.com>

Science fiction fans (and others?) may enjoy this futuristic view of doom (Shockwave movie with sound).

<http://rmitz.org/AYB3.swf>

European site with photos, descriptions and specs of US Navy vessels and vehicles.

<http://navysite.de>

Thousands of aircraft photos – commercial, private, military, antique, gliders, blimps, historic, cockpits, cabins, paint schemes, etc..

<http://www.airliners.net>

An amazingly vast collection of very old personal computers.

<http://www.homecomputer.de>

Kite photography – view the equipment, and then photos and mouse-controlled panoramas.

<http://www.thehaefners.com/kap/>

Imaginative and entertaining image/audio/video/flash creations? You decide.

<http://www.albinoblacksheep.com>

How long can you survive at this dodge ‘em game?

<http://uk.download.yahoo.com/ne/fu/dodge.html>

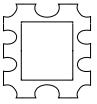
Why can’t that helpdesk technician fix your PC problem? Perhaps this is the problem.

<http://chroniclesofgeorge.nanc.com>

Briefly read about micromachines, and then view the image and movie galleries (links at bottom of window) of very small technology.

<http://mems.sandia.gov/scripts/index.asp>

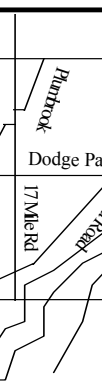




**STERLING HEIGHTS
COMPUTER CLUB**
PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385



DECEMBER AT SHCC:



TUESDAY DEC 7

Main Meeting.

7:30PM at

Carpalthia Club.

38000 Utica Road
Sterling Heights

16 Mile Road		
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Smart Computing
Magazine and some
other magazines, by
Jen Clausen

SIGS

WEDNESDAY

December 8

PC SIG 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.
(meeting rescheduled from November)

MONDAY

December 13

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

TUESDAY

December 21

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

TUESDAY

December 28

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

JANUARY 2005

Anti-Virus by Nick George of Disk-N-Dat

FEBRUARY 2005

FileMaker Pro 7 by Jon Stars of Data Design Pros