THE WYSIWYG

TUESDAY Feb 5
Main Meeting
7:3OPM

Meeting topic not finalized at the time of publication.

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

The President's Pen
by Don VanSyckel

The February meeting topic is still open as of writing this. It's been getting more difficult to get presenters for a while now and it hasn't turned around yet. Door prize contributors have also become fewer and farther in between. If anyone has ideas about either of the above, the officers are always interested in them.

The first item I'd like to share with you this month is the Linux SIG. This isn't a plea for additional participants. It's not always about quantity. The members who showed up at the first Linux SIG meeting were all interested and eager to learn and share about Linux. First I want to thank Ken Belbot for hosting the meeting at his home. Ken is the Linux SIG coordinator and opening your home is not a requirement of the job but he did anyway. I attended the meeting and I believe that each of the six participants enjoyed themselves. Linux is not for everyone, so don't worry, this isn't a pitch to convert you from Windows to Linux. However, depending on what you do with your computer you might want to consider it. Ken demo'ed his computer. He surfs the web, does word processing, uses spread sheets, and does other things you might wish to do. As you might know, the applications that many people call 'standard' don't run on Linux. That's OK. The software I saw would work for many of

us. Depending on the version and the distribution method you choose to get Linux, it can be about as difficult or easy as Windows to install. One of the benefits is that Linux runs faster on a given computer than Windows does, so if you are trying to nurse along old hardware this could help. On the other hand, if you've bought a new computer, you could experiment with Linux on the old 'too-slow-for-windows' computer that's now in the closet.

Last month I let you know about taking the plunge with a digital camera. This month I'll tell you about the first accessory purchased for the camera.. It's an 18 Gbyte storage device. It should hold up to 36,000 pictures. It cost about the same as 4 or 5 256 Mbyte smartmedia cards and holds 18 times as much. It also has a feature that allows it to email the pictures home when I'm on a trip in case I need to go beyond the 36,000 picture limit. My friend tells me my new peripheral looks more like a laptop. Well I guess he's right. But described the way I did, it sounds like a terrific camera peripheral! Well it's all in how you look at things. A couple of people have told me they're surprised I didn't already have a laptop already. Believe it or not, I don't want to have all the electronics with me all the time. Most

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:

FEBRUARY 2002
5 - SHCC— Main Meeting
6 - COMP meeting
10 - SEMCO meeting
11 - Net/Comm SIG
18 - Novice SIG
22 - Linux SIG
25 - PC SIG

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
22 - PC SIG

MARCH 2002
5 - SHCC— Main Meeting
6 - COMP meeting
10 - SEMCO meeting
11 - Net/Comm SIG
18 - Novice SIG
25 - PC SIG

MAY 2002
1 - COMP meeting
7 - SHCC—Main Meeting
12 - SEMCO meeting
13 - Net/Comm SIG
20 - Novice SIG
22 - 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

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Jack Vander- Schrier	586-739-7720	jvanders@home.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; Oakla nd 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.
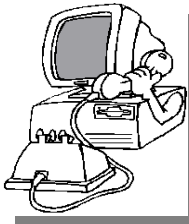Web page: http://www.geocities.com/

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 is Monday, February 11, 2002, starting at 7:00PM, at the Macomb County Library.
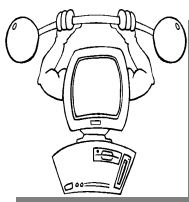
The SIG meeting days are 'generally' the second Monday of the month, depending on the meeting room availability.

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.

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PC SIG

The next meeting of the PC SIG is Monday, February 25, 2002. The SIG meeting is 'generally' the fourth Monday of the month. This meeting day has changed from the previous SIG Wednesday meeting day.
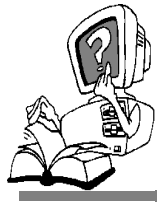
Intermediate level topics are discussed, aimed at users with some knowledge of computers. Specific PC questions and problems encountered by members are also discussed.

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.

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Novice SIG

The next meeting of the Novice SIG is scheduled for Monday, February 18, 2002, starting at 7:00PM, at the Macomb County Library.

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

New computer training sessions have started. The training sessions are free to club members, but members will be advised to purchase a book for $14.

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.

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

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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.

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Linux SIG

There is a new SIG starting. The first meeting was in January, 2002. The next meeting is Friday evening, February 22. The topic, and purpose of the SIG is to learn the Linux operating system and discuss topics that are related to it.

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

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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.

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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.

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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

None this month.

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Door Prizes

The SHCC offers door prizes at most regularly scheduled club meetings. The door prizes for February include a 3 hour training course from Gateway Country, donated by Gateway, two packs of recordable CD's, and Norton SystemWorks 2000 for Windows 95/98.

The winner's circle for January included:

Ed Durham won InkJet Paper donated by OfficeMax of Roseville, on Gratiot.

Ken Belbot won InkJet Labels donated by OfficeMax of Roseville, on Gratiot.

Gerald Hallman won Linux 7.1 software (lucky guy!).

James Golec won Norton AntiVirus software, donated ny a club member.

Ron Linsley won a can of Air Blaster for cleaning computers donated by OfficeMax of Roseville, on Gratiot.

James Waldrop won Quicken software donated by a club member.

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The President's Pen

young people see pagers and cell phones as a status symbol. Well I see them as a way others can intrude upon my life and time. Anyway, to the subject at hand.

I did buy the laptop to support the camera, that part I wasn't kidding about. As I mentioned last month the camera looks like a 'standard USB hard drive'. This is an extremely cool feature. It worked with the laptop out of the box, with no software to install, to transfer pictures to the computer's hard disk from the camera. I saw an advertisement in the Sunday paper about a laptop for $1000 at Circuit City. I had been looking at used laptops for $600 to $800+ but they seemed over priced to me for what you got, considering they were used and I really didn't want one that much. Well the advertised model wasn't available and the salesman showed me their built-to-order online center. They offered Compaq, Hewlett-Packard, Toshiba, and a no-name type laptops. I selected to specify the AMD family (Athlon) of processors and then to shop by price. An HP model came up for $1050. There were a couple of manufacturer offered 'free' upgrade options included. In check-

ing the ads the last couple of weeks I still think I got a good deal. (Usually after shopping for something and buying it, I stop looking at the ads because I usually find my model cheaper or a better model for the same price. Either way I don't like it so I don't look any more so I can be happy in my ignorance, so to speak.) The only down side of ordering the built-to-order is I couldn't take it home that day. It was delivered to the store two weeks later, which surprised me how quick it was. When I got the machine home everything worked fine as far a the HP hardware. It has XP home edition loaded. This is the only problem I've had, using XP. Call me old fashioned, I use the computer as a tool to do things. It's not fun to have an unfamiliar operating system slow you down and frustrate you. I intend to check for Windows 2000 drivers for the various devices, and if they are available, load Windows 2000 Professional. We'll see, I just need some time to do the research. I'm happy to be satisfied with the hardware part of the system because it can't be upgraded as easily as the software.

I don't know what I'm going to write about next month, I'm not buying anything this month or for quite a few months until the budget recovers from the assault that we made on it in the name of saving memories.

New SHCC Members
Please welcome the following new member:
Jack Voyles

A couple months ago someone asked why we didn't use the stage at Carpathia Club. When we started meeting there the projection screen was hung next to the movable partition so we faced that direction. Since then that screen is no longer there and we use a floor model projection screen. We just kept setting up in the same direction. Anyone who's commented about the new arrangement has liked it. We are also looking into having the PA system available on a regular basis.

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Return to Vendor
by Bruce Pechman, Atlanta PC 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.

For this article, I excluded web purchases, as Internet buying invokes another set of circumstances (except for shipping issues and small print, the policies should remain comparable). Whether you're on the receiving or giving end of computer related software or hardware, it's a prudent investment to know your return rights at prevailing retailers.

Before delving any further, let me state that returns of "computer software and computer related hardware electronics" can be a very thorny affair with your rights varying from state to state and store to store. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for these hi-tech returns to fall under the "gray area" of such policies and established laws. In particular, if you buy software and decide you are unhappy with the product for any reason, you could be in for a "sorry all sales are final attitude" from your retailer. There are two sides of the coin on this rather sticky situation. The retailer takes an inflexible stance for several reasons, but the prevailing justification is the illegal copying of media thanks in part to CDRW drives costing around $100. Not everyone agrees with this methodology. Bad Software is a book by Cem Kaner and David L. Pels about getting your money's worth when you buy computer software. The book is written to assist you with getting a refund, support, or compensation for significant losses caused by defective software. Like I said—it's a gray area. If the software does not perform as claimed or is bug-ridden should you have to bear the loss? You can demand, and sometimes get, a refund from where you bought the software, but you better visit the web site badsoftware.com or buy the book prior to doing battle. Another path is to review the software box and see if the software maker directly warrants a MBG for 30, 60, or 90 days. Remember software is not like a jacket you can try on...there is no way to know in advance if the software will adequately cover your needs or is buggy by just reading the side panel of the box. Fortunately, if the software is unopened and sealed, most retailers will gladly accept the return with a sales receipt within a specified period of time.

When it comes to hardware and electronics it's more of a black and white world of delineated guidelines. With the exception of the increasingly popular 15% or higher open box or "restocking" fees, your rights are reasonably negotiable for exchange, refund, or credit within a 30-day period and with a sales receipt. Be aware of unreasonable restocking fees that can come back to bite you. Can you imagine paying a 15% restocking charge on a $2000 computer you decided you didn't like 5 days later because the keyboard was not right for you? Well, if you purchased that computer at CompUSA you would have just flushed $300 down the toilet—that is an expensive "oops."

One last caveat—with the exception of the week after Christmas all major retailers will require an original receipt and valid ID for returns or adjustments. That said, here are four large national chain's return policies ranked from best to worst. As return policies are subject to change and modification without prior notice, these are the store policies in writing as of November 2001.

1. BestBuy: This retailer is in the number one spot for several reasons. Aside from having great prices, they also claim the least restrictive return policy of merchants in this group. BestBuy usually is first to have new product releases on its shelves. Although they sometimes charge a 15% restocking fee (unless defective), it's only applicable to notebook computers, camcorders, and digital cameras.

2. Circuit City: Circuit City's 15% restocking fee expands to all computers, monitors, and printers. Now here is their gray area: "and related merchandise." This statement is open to interpretation, but generally I have found grieving my case in a diplomatic manner to the store manager can be fruitful. Circuit City prices can be less competitive on some items so keep an eye on their circular advertisements to get the best deals.

3. CompUSA: This retailer plays hardball on any return. They are not

quite as nasty as Media Play, but they will even soak you for a 15% "Open Box Fee" for a $20.00 joystick. The CompUSA "Open Box Fee" goes as far to state: "...on ANY open item." In other words if you opened it and return it–you getting zonked for 15% of the purchase price!

4. Media Play: Media Play is just flat out malevolent when it comes to returns. Read the back of a Media Play receipt some time. Notice the first sentence: "All returns are subject to management approval." In other words management can deny your return of any product at any time for any reason. How subjective is this policy? So if the store manager is having a bad day he

or she just quips, "you can't return that." I have also found their prices to be very uncompetitive. If you buy anything at Media Play I have two words of advice for you...buyer beware. I avoid this retailer like the plague!

Some helpful tips do help your "happy returns" go a little smoother. Always try to keep the original bag, box, receipt, and packaging if opened. Always be as pleasant and cheery to your returns clerk as possible: "Oh gosh, where did you ever get that shirt with the embroidered Elvis rhinestones–I love Elvis too! Now about this camcorder..." Happy Returns!

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The Department of Homeland PC Security
By Patrick J. Suarez, a member of the Dayton Microcomputer Assn. Inc.

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. It is being reprinted with permission.

Former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge now heads a new federal department with the off-kilter title of the Department of Homeland Security, sort of evoking Aaron Copland's music and amber waves of grain. We all know why such a move became necessary.

Just as we now have to keep an eye on things around us in these United States, you must do likewise with your Windows-based PC. Think of computer security as a microcosm of the larger society in which your computer exists, with two fronts of defense against losing your precious data and your software's carefully cobbled together configuration, what with patches and upgrades and all.

The first front of defense ironically involves protecting your data from the

computer in which it resides. Let's begin with the fearsome registry, that chamber of horrors that holds information about your hardware and software and, if allowed to corrupt with a slowly mounting volume of incorrect or outdated entries, will bring about the demise of your entire system. Finally, someone has invented a program that corrects erroneous entries and removes unneeded data. It does so thoroughly and carefully. It scans every line of the registry and builds a list of wrong entries. It then sweeps this list to find new references in your system for the list's entries. In two mouse dicks, the whole registry is scrubbed clean. This wonder of wonders is Registry Healer 3.0 from www.zoneutils.com. It costs $19.95, the best double sawbuck you ever spent.

Next, remove fragmentation, the tendency for data to break up into multiple pieces that scatter around your hard drive, with Diskeeper Pro 7.0 from Executive Software (www.diskeeper.com). The program runs $45 as a download. Diskeeper is the most honest defragger around; sometimes, even multiple passes won't completely

defrag a drive. Diskeeper shows you the before and after, and sometimes the after requires another pass or two. And then you might never get to 100% defragmentation. My son's computer has a 60-gigabyte hard drive, and it fragmented so terribly that Norton Utilities couldn't read it. Diskeeper made some progress, but that drive is beyond even Diskeeper's ability to put digital Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Moral of the story: Defrag at least every other day.

And then there are those stray DLL files that hang around long after you have removed an application from your system. DLL files sit in C:\Windows\System and act as code libraries for Windows programs. Think of them as executive assistants to .EXE files, (e.g., word.exe). Word.exe needs an army of DLL files to help it do things like creating Word's screen images with which you are so familiar. It also needs them to help it perform actions (e.g., saving files, etc.). The popular "disk cleanup" programs you see on store shelves no longer seek and destroy old DLLs. But AnalogX's DLLArchive does. Actually, DLLArchive stores DLLs it removes from C:\Windows\System in another directory. Once you are absolutely certain that the DLLs that DLLArchive has banished are no longer needed, you can empty that folder (C:\Windows\DLLArchive). Final note: I do recommend Norton's Clean Sweep. It does safely rid your hard drive of unneeded files that build up during Web browsing. Get Clean Sweep at any store that sells software.

Add a final touch with DiskPie, an application from www.pcmag.com that tells you which programs are hogging your drive.

Voila! You've gained back hard drive room and rid your system of stuff it doesn't need and could get you into

trouble. And, I'm going to make a statement that I swear is true: Since I have been using the products described above, I have had no problems, none, with Windows Me. It has been as solid as a rock. No kidding. What better endorsement can I give these programs than that?

Let's move on to the other PC defense front, protecting your data from outside influences. First, stop using Microsoft Outlook. Because there are none so deaf as those who will not hear, I'm going to be pushy and obnoxious in the rest of this paragraph. It's the only way I can get through to those who need to read this. Ready? I know that there are obstinate corporate wanks out there who overglorify this deadly program, and they do so with a certain level of stuffy arrogance. Fine. You people are exactly the problem: every virus writer in the world writes to Outlook's well-known (and permanent) design flaws. But the Microsoft mindset is a wondrous thing to behold, so you folks will continue to gather and spread viruses at unprecedented rates. Here's a news flash: there are alternate programs out there that work just as well and that do not help the spread of malicious email code. OK, that's off my chest, and it ought to generate a certain level of e-mail traffic to the editor and publisher of this newsletter. At least I hope so.

You need firewall software, a Trojan horse sniffer, and an effective antivirus program. This is such well-trodden territory that I won't reiterate the obvious. I will tell you that my favorite trio of protection in this arena is ZoneAlarm Pro (finally, thank heavens, available on retail software shelves everywhere); Trojan Remover from www.simplysup.com ($24.95); and Norton Antivirus 2002, newly redesigned with the smartest antivirus engine that automatically grabs updates from its home Web site. I've tried them all and Norton gets my vote. ZoneAlarm Pro, by the way,

makes my Windows based computers totally invisible to everything on the Internet.

Essentially, my PCs can see the world, but the world has no idea that my PCs even exist.

Go one more mile, then, and visit www.scumware.com. Download and run AdAware, Surf + and Gator. These programs remove spyware from your system. Spyware is insidious code planted by advertisers in your registry and Windows folder. This, friends, is going to be a big deal in Congress as users face off against marketing muscle. These guys want to climb into your wallet, psyche and soul, and they'll stop at nothing in terms of Web bugs and bots to get there. Be on your guard. Tell them to take a hike.

I find it sad that we must invest so much time and energy into protecting us from each other. What a glorious tool the computer continues to be. But with good comes evil, and you have to gird your digital loins against the world that exists past your firewall.

I leave you with a few thoughts. First, sometimes these programs can give you wrong information, but it's easy to tell when they do. I tried to install the new Real One, the latest edition of Real Audio, into my Windows Me computer. After installation, Real One would not open. So, I tried to use Add/Delete Programs and the uninstaller failed. I manually extricated the program from my hard drive and registry. When I ran DLL Archive, it found 1,700 DLL files suddenly orphaned. Registry Healer found 1,548 registry errors. Clearly, this was nonsense and you learn what to trust and what not to trust with these programs. The installation and forced removal of Real One tipped my Windows Me over the edge and into the Chasm of Registry Oblivion. I reformatted the drive and installed, gasp!, Windows XP. Since I had not installed a new operating sys-

tem on that drive in years (Windows 95 became Windows 98 which became Windows Me), it was time to rebuild everything from scratch. Real One was the program that finally did my system in.

Second, all of the programs I described in this article are for protection in the Windows environment. On my Linux computer, I need none of this.

And I rarely have a problem. Now, as they say, "pila in area tua est". [If Caesar were alive today, he'd translate that to "the ball is in your court". Go forth and conquer your system.]

Patrick J. Suarez, a member of the Dayton Microcomputer Assn. Inc. is a nationally recognized Internet writer, trainer, speaker and consultant. He has appeared on numerous radio and TV programs across the United States. He is the Internet speaker at DMA®'s semi-annual Computerfest® trade show in Dayton, OH each spring & fall. Mr. Suarez published a tutorial software program called "The Beginner's Guide to the Internet" in 1993, and a book by the same title followed in 1995. In addition, Mr. Suarez has been published by Que. Mr. Suarez operates a Web site supporting people who have just learned that they have a tumor. He has just completed a project with Qwest Communications in Dublin, Ohio, as a Senior Technical Communicator.

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Member Ads

Ads are available 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. There is no charge to members.

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Tweak internet Explorer for Fun and Productivity

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

My wife says I get cranky easily. She says it's a gene, or maybe a strand of my DNA, but I'm definitely crabby, and it happens whenever the computer starts acting up.

See, the last time I re-installed Microsoft's Internet Explorer, my Standard Button Bar, Address Bar, and Links were in different spots. To make me feel even crabbier, when I upgraded to a new version of Microsoft's Media Player, Radio Bar appeared in the same spot my Links Bar should have been.

Going Back
The first thing I had to do was get my Bars back in order. In IE, just right mouse click on any blank area on the upper portion of the toolbar and click the check mark for each item you want to see or hide.

Toolbar Customizing
The neat thing about IE's bars is you can drag them onto other toolbars–up, down, left, or right–move them to the very top menu bar, and easily resize them.

I have the Pull down menus at the very top with an add-on Browser Recorder to the right. Below that is IE's Button bar, one I customized to add buttons I use often and remove rarely touched buttons. (Do it by clicking a blank portion of the toolbar area and selecting Customize. Be *very* careful you don't inadvertently hit the poorly placed Reset button in the dialog box.)

Next down is the Link bar with buttons linked to the spots I go to daily, followed below by IE's standard Address bar and Google's add-on browser towards the right.

If you start fiddling and foul up the size or placement of the bars, try this:

From IE's Tools menu, click Internet Options, choose Programs, and click the Reset Web Settings.

The Magic of the Links Bar
One incredibly powerful–and under-utilized-feature in IE is the Links bar. Mine has a button for each of the three search engines I use regularly. Other single-use buttons include PC World, Yahoogroups, PIBMUG, eBay, TVGrid, and a Web-based e-mail program.

Three more buttons are multi-function. When I click on any of them, a list of other links drops down. I use one for sites I visit almost every day, another for weekly visited sites, and the third for pages I've visited that I might want to go to again.

Link Bar Fix-Me-Ups
Microsoft has official advice for adding items to your Links Bar. They say to drag the icon for the page from your Address bar to your Links bar or just drag a link from a Web page. That works fine for a new link. But when you're ready to modify a link, you're stuck with using a click on the right mouse. You can do it but there's a slicker way.

Open PowerDesk or Windows Explorer and go to your \Windows \Favorites directory (now called Folders). With PowerDesk, open another window pane (use Control-F3) or in Explorer, open another Explorer.

You're going to do a few things, and you needn't do it in this order.

*Rename the filename: Make it shorter but remember that each file should end in "URL.." Use F2 or the right mouse button. Doing this will give you room for more items on the Links bar. For instance, Google is just

"gog," PIBMUG is "PIB," TVGRID is "TV." You get the idea.

*Change the Icon: Right mouse click on the file and select Properties. Click Change Icon and Browse. You'll see many files, and some will contain icons. You can go up one level to the \Windows folder for other icons. Just click on any file that has an icon (you'll see them) and click it. That icon then represents the URL.

*Add or Remove: You may have a URL you often use in your favorites. Treat it as you would any other file– drag and drop it onto the Links folder. Want a Folder on your Links Bar? Nothing to it: In Explorer, it's File * New * Folder and then just add items (filenames ending with URL) to the folder. In PowerDesk, just click F7.

By the way, the changes are dynamic– you can see them immediately in Internet Explorer.

Favorites? While We're Here...
You might as well examine all the other items in your Favorites folder. They're all part of Internet Explorer's Favorites–you know, the stuff you see when you click the Favorites button. Many of these are poorly named, outdated, or useless. And I'll bet the majority of them could be better organized. Instead of using IE's Organize Favorites, use the method above. It's faster and substantially easier.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. Write to him at steve_bass@pcworld.com. 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.

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.*

Everything Olympics 2002: Complete rundown of Winter Games events and broadcast schedules, athlete bio's, country profiles, virtual tours of venues, interactive judging elements. Also info on the Paralympics and the Olympic Arts Festival. The second site offers 360-degree views of many Olympic slopes, rinks, and tracks.
http://saltlake2002.com
http://saltlake2002.com/venues/venues.html

An Olympics primer on the rings, flame, mascots, commercialism, drugs, medals, politics, host cities, committees, more.
http://aafla.org/6oic/primer_frmst.htm

Additional Olympics sites:
http://kodak.com/US/en/corp/magazine/
http://www.uen.org/2002/
http://nbcolympics.com
http://www.usolympicteam.com/

The DVD Journal relates to movies, and in the DVD format. They list news of upcoming releases, dates for new DVD releases, reviews of movies released on DVD, and a DVD lexicon.
http://www.dvdjournal.com/

Walgreens' history, with old photos of soda fountain jerks, and a chocolate malted milk recipe.
http://www.walgreens.com/about/history/default.jhtml

Gamers will find these sites useful. They contain selected game reviews/previews (some Xbox and PS2 also), patches, hardware drivers, demos, articles, more.
http://www.fileplanet.com
http://www.gamesfirst.com/

View the 95-year history of the electric vacuum cleaner here, complete with vintage photos of many makes and models. Listen for that familiar sound when you get here.
http://www.137.com/museum/

Fight "Spyware". Ad-Aware is a free program, which scans your PC for known advertising systems and lets you remove them safely.   It scans your memory, registry and file system. Get it here, now!
http://www.lsfileserv.com

See where your charitable donation goes before you contribute. View mission/purpose, executive profiles, financial balance sheets (detailed revenue and expenses), actual IRS documents, tips, and more. Make an informed choice before parting with your cash.
http://www.guidestar.org/
http://www.give.org

Webteacher offers an on-line Web Tutorial, discussing menus, browsers, HTTP, Internet addressing, navigating the web, URLs, email, protocols, FTP file transfer, searching engines, gateways, image/sound/movie file formats, newsgroups, chat groups, and much more.
http://www.webteacher.org/winnet/

Internet error messages? CMTS? Country domain extensions? DSL? Data format extensions? Server types? Text message abbreviations? All the answers to your PC questions are at this online dictionary for computer and Internet technology.
http://www.webopedia.com/

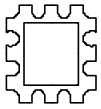A truly high-tech clock for your PC.
http://yugop.com/ver3/stuff/03/fla.html

FreeAnswers provides a natural-language interface for searching the support knowledge bases of Microsoft, Intuit and Adobe products.
http://www.freeanswers.com/

Here you will find a group of entertaining "war stories" about the early computer industry.
http://www.rickadams.org/warstories/

This selection starts with a world mapping and impact of the top 10 world-wide viruses (by location or name). Clicking on any of the listed viruses leads to the second site. Click on 'Security Info' for a very informative virus encyclopedia, primer, and glossary. Click on 'Free Tools' for a free on-line virus check of your PC, plus virus checkers for PDAs.
http://www.rickadams.org/viruses.html
http://www.antivirus.com

Investigate the sources of first names, and check their meanings and popularity over the decades. (What does 'Belinda' or 'Roger' really mean?)
http://behindthename.com

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385
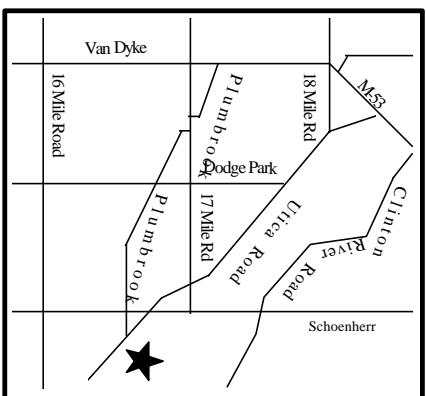
FEBRUARY AT SHCC:

TUESDAY FEB 5
Main Meeting.
7:30PM at
Carpathia Club.
38000 Utica Road
Sterling Heights

Meeting topic not finalized at the time of publication.

SIGS

MONDAY
Net/Com SIG
February 11
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

MONDAY
Novice SIG
February 18
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

FRIDAY
LINUX SIG
February 22
7:00PM at Ken Belbot's home.

MONDAY
PC SIG
February 25
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

March 5: Meeting topic to be determined

April 2: Windows XP–presented by Sonal Shah of Microsoft