



# THE WYSIWYG



\$3.00

June 2002

Volume 14, Issue 6

## STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

**TUESDAY June 4**  
**Main Meeting**  
**7:30PM**

**Mary Lou Metzger of the Public Library will present "Web Search Engines".**

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

IN THIS ISSUE:	
<b>The President's Pen</b>	1
<b>About SHCC</b>	2
<b>Resource People</b>	2
<b>SIG Meetings</b>	3
<b>Club Business &amp; Info</b>	3-5
<b>Door Prizes</b>	4
<b>Ask the Expert</b>	4
<b>Leave Your Computer on Overnight?</b>	6
<b>The \$152 Internet Bargain</b>	6
<b>What Were You Thinking...?</b>	7
<b>WYSIWYG Web Watch</b>	9
<b>SHCC June Schedule</b>	10

### The President's Pen

*by Don VanSyckel*



This month Mary Lou Metzger of the Sterling Heights Public Library will present "Web search engines and how to use them". Mary Lou has presented at SHCC several times before. In fact she presented this topic a while ago to the Internet/Communications SIG. Since then there are new features in some search sites and Mary Lou has recently updated the presentation. Mary Lou does numerous presentations for the Library on a variety of topics and is a seasoned presenter who connects well with the audience. Be sure to attend Tuesday. You'll learn some good tips to help you find the information you're looking for on the web more quickly and easily.

I like to write about things in this column that are positive rather than negative. In other words, I rather relate good stuff to you instead of complaining about things. However, something you just have to keep complaining until enough people hear it and help you complain. What I'm talking about is Comcast's internet service offering. Comcast reported to people that they were replacing the services that Excite@Home provided. Anyone who has their service knows that they have not done this. On the surface it appears they have but it's in the details they haven't lived up to Excite@Home. In way of analogy what I am saying is:

suppose you drive a Cadillac, it's stolen, and your insurance company replaces your car with another car. When you complain that the Neon they gave you doesn't have the same functionality as the Cadillac you had, your insurance company says it has four wheels and gets you where you want to go and that's all you get per their policies. Sounds a little ridiculous, and none of us would stand for this type of behavior in most parts of our life, but the former Excite@Home customers have been treated in just this manner when it came to Comcast 'replacing' the Excite@Home internet service.

Previously Comcast transferred your data from your home to Excite@Home and the return data from Excite@Home to your home. Excite@Home provide the connection to the internet, your email server, and your personal web page server. Now Comcast has set up their own servers to host your email account and your personal web pages. While Comcast provides all the same services (now) that Excite@Home provided, we are not getting the same quality of services that Excite@Home provided. The two areas that I am aware of where Comcast just doesn't measure up are in their news groups service and email providing.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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:**

**JUNE 2002**

**4 - SHCC— Mary Lou Metzger of the Public Library will present “Web Search Engines”.**  
 5 - COMP meeting  
 9 - SEMCO Meeting  
 10 - Net/Comm SIG  
 17 - Novice SIG  
 20 - Linux SIG  
 24 - PC SIG

**AUGUST 2002**

**No main club meeting in July and August.**  
 7 - COMP meeting  
 11 - SEMCO meeting  
 12 - Net/Comm SIG  
 15 - Linux SIG  
 19 - Novice SIG  
 27 - 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

**SEPTEMBER 2002**

**3 - SHCC—Topic Pending**  
 4 - COMP meeting  
 8 - SEMCO meeting  
 9 - Net/Comm SIG  
 16 - Novice SIG  
 19 - Linux 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
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	jgolec@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, June 10, 2002, starting at 7:00PM, at the Macomb County Library.

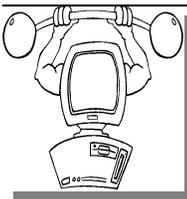
The SIG meeting days are 'generally' the second Monday of the month, depending on the meeting room availability.

Each month the members of the Net/Comm SIG discuss the Internet to help members of the SHCC learn more about this communications media. This month Jack Vander-Shrier will be the presenter.

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, June 24, 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. At the June meeting, general questions and answers about computers will be discussed, along with a few surprises.

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, June 24, 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.

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. The next meeting is Thursday evening, June 20.

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.



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

## 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](mailto:jerrycarson@email.com)



#### BIOS

In April we discussed computer programs and the fact that computers can only do what their programs tell them to do. In fact, your computer (when turned on) is ALWAYS running a program. Usually that program is checking the keyboard to see if you're typing anything. But wait, if computers are so stupid, how does it know how to check the keyboard? Remember, the basic instructions that most computers know are ADD, SUBTRACT, MULTIPLY, DIVIDE, STORE, LOAD, JUMP, and COMPARE. I don't see any CHECK KEYBOARD instruction.

Well, the computer gets a little help from the rest of its hardware. When a key on the keyboard is pressed, an electrical signal is sent into the computer where it is received by a keyboard decoder chip. This chip, based on the signal received, determines which key was pressed and places a code into a special memory location. Then, the computer only has to check that location (using LOAD and COMPARE instructions) to find out which key, if any, was pressed.

Sending characters, say out to the printer, works in the other direction. The computer puts the code into a special location and the hardware takes care of getting it to the device. The status of the transfer is placed in a memory location so the computer can check to make sure everything went OK or retry if there was an error.

This is a little simplified but basically, these same steps are taken to send information out of the computer (output) or to get information in to the computer (input). That includes modems, printers, scanners, keyboards, mice, graphics, networks, hard disks, floppy disks, tape backups, etc.

So if a computer program needed to read the keyboard, read and write to a floppy, write to the screen, and print, it would have to deal with all those special memory locations and all the retries and setup steps as well. And this is exactly what the first programs did.

However there were incompatibility problems. Even computers that used the same machine language might use different locations for their input and output (I/O). So a program that worked on one computer might not work with a different computer, even if they used the same chip. Also, if you wanted to use a different printer, you had to rewrite your program.

This problem was solved by creating a collection of routines (small pieces of machine language) that handled the special memory locations. So if you wanted to check the keyboard, the computer could JUMP to the routine that checked the keyboard. That routine would handle all the special memory locations and would JUMP

back with the character received. And, most importantly, the location of the "check keyboard" routine would be the same across a number of different computers. So the program would not need to be changed to work with a different computer. These routines were placed into a ROM chip and soldered onto the computer.

This also solved another very difficult problem. If the computer always needs to be running a program, how does it know how to read the hard disk and get the first program? Again, the answer was the BIOS (Basic Input Output System) chip. One of the routines in the BIOS chip handles reading the first program from the hard drive (or floppy, CDROM, or network). Once that first program is loaded, the computer JUMPS to it and starts running.

Over the years the BIOS has gotten more and more complicated. Today they may perform self diagnostics, virus checking, configure option cards, and even handle security. And, oddly enough, most computers today no longer use the BIOS for I/O. Instead they use device drivers. More about what a device driver is and why they are used instead of the BIOS in the next installment.

The Expert



## Door Prizes

The SHCC offers door prizes at most regularly scheduled club meetings. The door prizes for the June meeting are a package of ink jet labels of 50 sheets & 750 labels, and two packages of HP CD-recordable (2 cd's in each pkg.)

The May Winners Circle included:

**Don Hjelle** won a book "Upgrade and Repair Your PC"

**Martin Brown** won a book "Successful Computer Consultant"

**Ron McKay** won a TechTeam mug

**Robert Frost** won a can of Air Blaster  
**Jan Cook** won the grand prize - a personal 2 hour consulting visit from Jack Vander-Schrier



## 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.



## The President's Pen

*(Continued from page 1)*

When Comcast took over, news groups were just not available at all. I realize that not everyone uses news groups or even knows what they are. For those of us who have been 'playing computer' for a while you might remember bulletin board services (BBSs). There are literally thousands of different news groups on virtually any subject you can dream up. I monitor a couple of these on a regular basis. News groups you

subscribe to appear in my email reader below the inbox and are just a click to select. Comcast has recently made some provisions with another company and Comcast customers can now sign up for an account and password with this third party. This is great compared to not having it at all. On the other hand, news groups used to be a click away and now I have yet one more user name (not the same as my Comcast user name) and one more password (you guessed it, not the same as my Comcast password). I'm not sure why Comcast hasn't simply set up a news group server which no user name and password would be needed, instead of involving a third party and forcing all their customers who use news groups to go through the inconvenience of entering a user name and password every time they go to use news groups.

The other issue is the email service. There are two items here. In all the time that I used Excite@Home, my email inbox never filled up. I have been told that Excite@Home had a 10 Mbyte limit but I don't know how to confirm this. At any rate my email never piled up enough to bump into whatever limit there was if there was a limit. My email inbox with Comcast has filled up numerous times. This is both embarrassing and inconvenient. At least one of the times it filled, I had asked someone to send me some information. They did me a favor and got the info right out to me only to have their email bounce back to them making me look, well let's just say, not good. Also I am on several email distribution lists. These lists had email bounce back. When these lists get a couple of bounced emails they automatically take your email address off the list. I had to go back and reinstall myself to several lists after these 'inbox full' events.

The second email issue is Comcast limits how many people you can send an email to at one time. I have been

told by Comcast tech support that the limit is 25 recipients on one email. The reason stated is to prevent people from spamming from a Comcast email account. This is ridiculous. If I were a spammer, it would be simple enough to write a program which could take a list of email addresses of any length, and prepare and send 25 recipients emails over and over again until the entire list had been sent. In fact this program could be run in the background while I surfed the web or did other things on the computer. So basically this rule has mostly inconvenienced the little guy who isn't a spammer, but does send out email to a bunch of people. I routinely send to the SHCC membership, which is over 100 with email addresses. Also I send to my family a few times a year which is 34 addresses currently and growing. Comcast has not offered any exceptions to the rule or any hope of removing this annoying inconvenient rule, which is probably not preventing what it was 'designed to prevent' anyway.

I have complained to Comcast representatives at least three times. I don't expect Comcast to stop what they're doing and change things because I complained. But if enough of their customers contacted tech support or customer service about the three issues above, possibly they would notice. Actually, the issues above are annoying enough that I am shopping for another internet service provider (ISP). It's a slow process. Since the only alternative is a dial-up, that would be trading one set of inconveniences for another set. There might be a ray of hope. I have it from a good source that Ameritech could have installed equipment which would make their DSL service more widely available, and I have also heard that WOW cable is about to begin offering internet service. More about these in the future as details become available.

I hope to see you Tuesday, it promises to be a great presentation.



## Leave Your Computer On Overnight?

An opinion from a Kim Komando newsletter :

**Q**. I've resolved most of the important questions in life. But one has me baffled: Should I shut my computer down at night? Or is it better to leave it running? Actually, that's two questions. -Andy in Austin

**A** : You're not the only one puzzled by this mystery. It is nearly as divisive as the Windows-Macintosh conundrum. The short answer to this question is this: It doesn't much matter. But we'll go into more detail than that.

Obviously, if you turn your computer off, some electricity will be saved. Maybe you'd see a saving on your power bill.

Additionally, your memory resources are flushed out every time you shut down. You want to avoid a buildup of clutter here.

Finally, if you shut the machine down, you can unplug it. That will protect it against late-night lightning strikes.

As for the other side:

Some people believe that turning components on and off causes wear. They believe things last longer if left on.

Furthermore, many people like the convenience of not waiting for the computer to boot up in the morning.

Personally, I leave my computer on. I scan the hard drive for viruses and do my backup overnight. I also run ScanDisk and Disk Defragmenter a few times a week. These are all things that I don't want to do during the day.

But if you prefer to turn your machine off, do so. The truth is, it really doesn't matter.

### Don VanSyckel's opinion on this topic:

It really boils down to one advantage to leaving it on and a couple of advantages to turning it off.

Leave it on: you don't have to wait 25 seconds while the computer boots.

Turn it off: 1) Today a PC uses about \$9 to \$10 of electricity to run it for the entire month. If you use your PC 8 hours a day you avoid spending \$6 to \$7 a month or \$72 to \$84 a year by turning it off. 2) During the air condi-

tioning months the extra load on your electric bill can be as much or more than the PC electric cost adding another \$20 to \$30 a year for leaving it on. 3) Hard drives are mechanical devices and are designed to run for extremely long periods of time but they do wear and break. Once again if you use your PC 8 hours a day the hard disk should last almost three times as long.

So like a lot of other things, if you have the money and choose to spend it that way, leave the PC on, if you want to economize, extend your hard drive life, and not burn as much foreign oil, turn it off when not using it for more than two or three hours.




---

## The \$152 Internet Bargain

### When to decide if a trip to Target is a better bet

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

---

**I** don't have a good head for numbers, so double-check these figures for me, okay? I went online, pressed a few buttons, and two minutes later, bought a bottle of multivitamins for \$10 and some Folic Acid for \$3. Shipping was \$3 so the entire bill was \$16, right?

Nope. It cost me closer to \$152 and two hours of futzing.

Raise your hand if you think shopping on the Internet can save you money. No doubt it can, provided you use it efficiently.

In the next few minutes, I'll show you the mistakes I've made (hey, I'm not as bright as I look, okay?), how you can avoid them, and maybe stave off a few gray hairs in the process.

#### Bargain Hunting

The trap I always seem to fall into is spending a few minutes trying to find the best deal on the Internet. (Computing minutes, as you may have

noticed, are not related to real minutes, but that's another story.) I started by opening my Internet Explorer Favorites and trying to remember which folder I tucked the "vitamins and drugs" into.

Oddest thing, I muttered, is how these darn Favorites have a way of getting disorganized. I mean, what was I thinking when I combined DVD Rentals and DVD Player Research into the same folder. That's confusing, even to me, and it might be best if I separated them into two folders. I wouldn't take five minutes to fix. You think?

Of course, an interesting thing happened while cleaning and dusting my Favorites. I noticed the "Free Stuff" folder, the one with coupons, discounts, and giveaways. Right, I think, I'd better stop by there first and see if Drugstore.com or MotherNature.com is offering free shipping. My first stop is to couponsforyou.com. Nothing for me there because it's a dot.gone. So were four other coupon sites. I hit the

jackpot with [www.dealofday.com](http://www.dealofday.com) because [rugstore.com](http://rugstore.com) offered free shipping and a free diaper travel bag with any \$20 order. Cool, I could use the diapers for buffing the car and I'd find something to do with the bag. And free shipping will put \$4.95 in my pocket.

### So What's the Deal?

The deal wasn't difficult to handle. Do all your shopping, stick the code into the special box on checkout, and shipping was deducted from the total. I did all my shopping, clicked done, and [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com) gleefully greeted me. "Yo! Steve-o! Welcome back buddy. Good to see you! But listen, the free shipping, and diaper deal? New customers only. Sorry, pal." Busted.

I couldn't just let that go. It was a challenge to my hacker mentality and less-than-adequate hacking skills. Creating a new user name and account couldn't be much work, and [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com) wouldn't be the wiser. I really wanted that diaper bag.

### Busted Again

"Hey, Frank, when did you move in with Bass?" Around ten this morning, I fumed. It was a good question and one that I felt [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com) had no right to ask. As a consenting adult, what I did with my alias is my business.

I was busted again and chose not to play around with [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com)'s cookies. So I headed back to [AdvanceRX's](http://AdvanceRX.com) site, added three bottles of Folic Acid to [AdvanceRX's](http://AdvanceRX.com) shopping cart. But it hit me that [Drugstore.com](http://Drugstore.com) was selling it in bottles of 200 tablets, a better deal. I think. But hell, even if I paid for shipping and went without the diaper bag, that'd save me roughly \$2. Better check.

So I open a fourth browser window, navigate to the site, and find I was right the first time. [Advance RX](http://AdvanceRX.com) is the best deal. You know, Bass, I think, kicking myself. You oughta stick this

stuff on a spreadsheet so next time you can refer back to it. Easy enough to do, so I do a few rows and columns, stick in sites, vitamins, prices, shipping, and whether I've ordered there before. It was worth the 35 minute investment, really, even though I decided to forego any fancy fonts or formatting.

### Stay Calm, Okay?

By now I'm feeling a little antsy so I head back to [AdvanceRX](http://AdvanceRX.com) to place the order and get on with my life. At this point, you're probably one step ahead of me. I faced a really dumb problem: After all my futzing elsewhere, [AdvanceRX](http://AdvanceRX.com) timed out. The shopping cart was empty, my patience was fading, and I was in dire need of a psychotropic drug. Try clicking IE's Back button, I thought and Windows applauded my decision with a General Protection Fault. With all the B vitamins I'd de-

pleted, I didn't think it made sense to bother rebooting.

I asked my wife if she'd like to make a quick trip to Costco. She did, we found the vitamins (about \$2 more than online, not including the stress formula I felt a need to buy); we also bought \$100 of stuff we really didn't need and went out for lunch.

**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](mailto:Steve_bass@pcworld.com). Check PCW's current edition at <http://www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at [www.pcworld.com/bass\\_letter](http://www.pcworld.com/bass_letter).**




---

## What Were You Thinking...? Products That Never Saw The Light Of Day

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

---

Ever wonder about the stuff we never write about? I write for [PC World](http://PCWorld.com) and I'm on the inside. I get to see all junky software, bizarre gadgets, and wacky hardware. Here are a few that ended up in the trash can.

### Do It Yourself Receipts

Do you cut those rebate coupons out of the newspaper? You know the kind: Send in the product's UPC code, fill out the form, and include the store's original receipt. Do you always fall for it? Don't feel bad, it happens to all of us. In fact, it's a well-thought out marketing scam, because you never, ever save the store receipt, and never send anything, saving the company plenty of bucks.

Fortunately, there's [BoguStub](http://BoguStub.com), a hot solution developed by a cool programmer with too much time on his hands. From an easy to use Windows interface, type in the name of the store, the

date purchased, and the price and name of the purchased items. And Voila!, out pops an authentic receipt from your laser printer, complete with accurate sales tax added to the total.

[BoguStub's](http://BoguStub.com) features include a handy pull-down menu of local stores, the ability to change tax tables, and even a friendly "Thanks for shopping with us!" tag at the bottom of the receipt. [BoguStub](http://BoguStub.com) is also useful when you've lost a receipt and need to return an item. Future releases will let you print a color watermark on the receipt, add store names to a look-up table, and print realistic perforations. List price: Free. LastMinuteProductions, <http://www.bogusystem.com/>

### Just Expense It!

Face it: no one likes the hassle of filling in expense accounts. But there's no getting around it, especially if you want to get reimbursed. Fortunately, there's [FillUp 2.0](http://FillUp.com), a handy macro for getting

your spreadsheet up to speed, quickly and easily. All you need to do is give FillUp a starting range, say, \$150. Within seconds, FillUp works backwards, breaking the amount into your spreadsheet categories, including travel and entertainment, transportation, and lodging, to name just a few.

The program's smart, using odd numbers, such as \$5.21, \$16.63, and \$35.17, and the total is never an even number. Don't have a spreadsheet with categories? No problem because FillUp will do it for you, in over seven professional categories including sales rep, attorney, and journalist. What's more, FillUp even prints receipts, from taxi and airline tickets to restaurant stubs and itemized hotel portfolios. Macros available for Excel, Quattro Pro, and Paradox. List Price: \$75. FillerUp Corp, (212) 555-fill, www.fillerup.com

### Lickity Split Replies

It's a fact of life: In today's economy, many people are out of work. At the same time, busy executives barely have time to read, never mind answer, their electronic mail. But with QuickReply, there's a quick solution for everyone. QuickReply is a remote communication package that actually pays you to log onto an executive's email service, read the messages and respond with bright, business-like repartee. There's more free time for the executive and you get a couple of bucks in your pocket.

QuickReply comes complete with a built-in spell checker, thesaurus, and grammar checker, and includes plenty of sample responses. Don't know an executive? It's easy. Just choose from a list of high quality execs supplied by QuickReply. Price includes payment of \$1 per message processed. List price: \$149. Total Solutions, (415) 555-quik. www.quickreply.com

### Give me an A+

Want to help your child get into college? Forget about Encarta. Ignore

Comptons. What you need is Make the Grade, an extraordinary CD-ROM based program that actually writes your child's reports and term papers. Here's how it works: From an easy to use menu, you-or your child-answer some simple questions. Start with "What grade do you want?" Then, "What's the subject or topic of the report?" One more. "What grade of school are you in?" Choose from writing styles including casual, terse, convoluted, and scientific, to name just a few. Finally, decide how many pages you'll need.

Make the Grade searches through the CD-ROM's 200 gigabytes of highly indexed, compressed data. The program quickly finds the facts and details about the chosen subject, keeping your child's profile in mind. In no time flat, your child has a polished report ready to go. What's more, Make the Grade discovers items even the professor probably doesn't know. The professional version creates theses, dissertations, and newspaper and magazine articles. List price: \$79; Professional \$249. MG Systems, (213) 555-grad. www.makethegrade.com

### Tell Me About It

Do you need to get some work done? Tired of hassling with Windows and exhausted from installing all those upgrades? Try The Couch, a hot new product from the cool streets of Beverly Hills. Within six hours of using The Couch, you'll be ready to give up your computer and get a life. Features include WAVs with appropriate and supportive responses, dynamic help screens so you can determine your weekly progress, and a handy dialer for those late night crises.

Helpful Wizards are also available to guide you-step by step-through those times when you're nagged with insecurities and doubts. And if that's not enough, you get valuable look-up tables with the most common computing neuroses: Writers Block Disorder, Computeritus Confusidis, and the

deadly (and often life-threatening) GPF Deficit Disorder, to name just a few. The list price for The Couch is \$150 an hour but I've seen interns and psych assistants working for as little as \$50. The Couch, Psyche International, (800) LAY-DOWN, www.psyintl.com

### Play it Safe

You've seen them on everything from old-fashioned floppy disks and Zip drives to hard drives. AVOID EXPOSURE TO ALL MAGNETIC FIELDS. DO NOT BEND OR FOLD. Unfortunately, most people don't pay close attention to the warning, resulting in damage to untold thousands of disks and drives. Millions of dollars and more than thirty thousand jobs are lost each year because of this carelessness. Luckily, GayGezunt's got a hot answer: bright fluorescent BeSafe Tags that will be noticed and remembered! Self-adhesive and tough to remove, BeSafe Tags carry the important warning all end-users should heed.

Available in over thirty colors, such as Hot Pfunk, Sizzling Scatado, and Cool Culumber, the tags use standard fonts as well as Algerian, Zonk and Bondini. Try BeSafe Tags on other items, such as your morning newspaper, your car, your spouse, and your children. List price: \$3/roll. GayGezunt Int'l. (714) 555-safe. www.gaygezunt.com

Yes, before you send me a zillion e-mails, all of these products are entirely fictional. Except, strangely enough, BoguStub, which is a legitimate product, available on the author's web site.

**Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUGWrite to him at [steve\\_bass@pcworld.com](mailto:steve_bass@pcworld.com). Check PCW's current edition at [www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp) and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at [www.pcworld.com/bass\\_letter](http://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](mailto: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.***



Take some virtual tours of an Amish Farm. Read some Amish humor and wisdom, and learn about Amish life and culture, religion, and education. Lots of photos.

<http://www.amishbuggyrides.com>

A large collection of residential antique fans dating back to the 1800's, including water-powered fans. Also fan PC graphics, terminology, care and maintenance, and a calendar of fan fairs.

<http://www.fancollectors.org>

Home of the coolest machine on ice.

<http://www.zamboni.com>

Info on how web sites track your habits and preferences on the Internet, with protection tips, the pros and cons of cookies, encryption links, and suggested anti-cookie downloads.

<http://cookiecentral.com>

The Insurance Information Institute offers suggestions on performing a home inventory for insurance

purposes, and how-to Q&As for auto, home, health, life, disability, and other insurance categories to assist you in spending your insurance dollars wisely.

<http://www.iii.org>

For the music addict, this British site will inform you of daily musical events, including chart facts, 'best' lists, awards, No. 1's, weddings and deaths, numerous top 10 lists, more.

<http://www.thisdayinmusic.com>

These sites will help with mowing, watering, fertilizing, planting, repairing, weeding, and pest and pet questions you might have regarding your green carpet, including when/where/why/how to perform related activities.

<http://allaboutlawns.com>

<http://yardcare.com/>

If you want to know what's in your PC, this free utility can take an audit of all the hardware and software installed on a PC, and display it in a browser window, without sending the info to any server anywhere (so they promise).

[http://belarc.com/free\\_download.html](http://belarc.com/free_download.html)

Getting spam e-mail, and want to know from where it came? This site will help you trace it back to the source ISP. Check this site's "Spam Complaints Primer" for a tutorial on extracting the offending IP address from an Outlook e-mail message header, and then enter it here to find the culprit. The site also assists you in writing an effective spam complaint letter.

<http://combat.uxn.com>

If you want to make sure that you are not missing any new broadband-only offerings on the web, this British site promises to keep you in the know. TV, movies, radio, gaming, news, mp3,

web cams, more.

<http://johnnybroadband.co.uk>

Yale University has a vast collection of old maps, and offers some for on-line viewing, including antiquarian world, continent, and country maps (1500s to 1800s), historical American and European city maps, and terrestrial and celestial globes.

<http://www.library.yale.edu/MapColl/online.html>

A vast collection of history sites relating to aviation, medicine, technology, military, and science. Also regional history sites (Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, plus more recent global/continental and US history). You won't want to miss the museums of computers.

<http://worldhistorycompass.com>

View the Classic Car Club of America's American and European photo gallery.

<http://classiccarclub.org/Auto%20Gallery.htm>

This site wants to be your 'online guide to offbeat attractions' across the US. Also check the Tourism News, and don't miss the hundreds of (sometimes odd) tip suggestions of travelers (arranged by state).

<http://roadsideamerica.com>

Know your medicine. Learn how to recognize the warnings on OTC medication containers and avoid ingesting active ingredients in excess.

<http://www.bemedwise.org>

Learn all about the many varieties of mushrooms, including history, care and handling, preparation and nutrition. Recipes also.

<http://mushroomcouncil.com>





# STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385  
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385



## JUNE AT SHCC:

**TUESDAY JUNE 4**

**Main Meeting.**

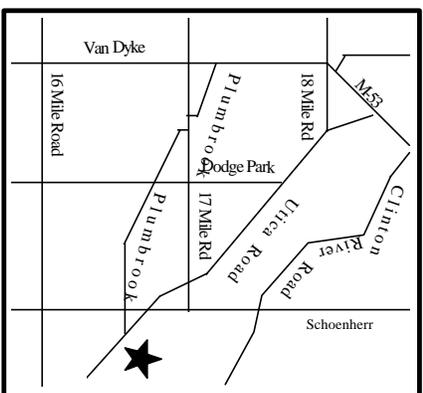
**7:30PM at**

**Carpattia Club.**

38000 Utica Road

Sterling Heights

Mary Lou Metzger of  
the Public Library  
will present "Web  
Search Engines".



## SIGS

**MONDAY**

**June 10**

Net/Com SIG

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

**MONDAY**

**June 17**

Novice SIG

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

**THURSDAY**

**June 20**

LINUX SIG

7:00PM at Ken Belbot's home.

**MONDAY**

**June 24**

PC SIG

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

---

**No Main Meeting in July and August.**  
(The SIGS will continue to meet over  
the summer.)