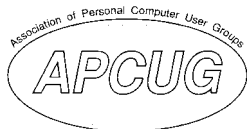# THE WYSIWYG

February 2007

Volume 19, Issue 2

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

$3.00

TUESDAY FEB 6
Main Meeting
7:30 PM

"Your Photos on the Web with Picasa Web Albums" by Jerry Hess of SHCC

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

The President's Pen
by Don VanSyckel

First I want to thank Rick Schummer for an excellent presentation last month about SnagIt by TechSmith. Rick commented at the beginning of the presentation that I had doubts he could fill the time talking about and demo'ing a screen capture program. It's true, I'm still surprised but it happened. Anyway, SnagIt is a good product with many fine features at a reasonable price.

Members will be glad to know that the financial health of the club has improved since the change in dues and reducing the monthly room charge. Not enough yet to send me to a club paid seminar in the islands, but on the other hand, we don't have to worry about where the money is to pay our bills. Thanks to all for supporting this aspect of SHCC.

Meeting at MCC has had mixed results. The room is fine and the Internet connection is great. The downside is it's challenging for some of our members to hike in from the parking lot. The MCC handicap parking allocated space count is inadequate and then non-handicap people steal some on the few spaces there are. Enforcement seems light also. In an effort to provide accessibility, in the past we've announced about shuttling members from their car to the front door and back. People haven't taken advantage of this. Our shuttler, Jerry Hess, is pre-senting this month so he won't be doing the shuttle this month. At the meeting this month the officers are going to scope out the parking lot and choose a gathering place for people to park at. In March and April we'll give the shuttle a try and then decide to cancel or continue.

From a discussion at the beginning of a recent club meeting and discussions at the Novice SIG, the officers believe it would be worth while to have an email client presentation. Items to cover would be archives, attachments, filters, and folders among others using both Outlook or Outlook Express and Mozilla Thunderbird. If you understood the terms listed in the previous sentence, you could help. We thought either two meetings or two people in one meeting could do the job. (I'm leaning towards two meeting if Rick can fill a meeting with screen capture.) If you can help, contact one of the officers.

This month's presentation promises to be of interest to all. "Your Photos on the Web with Picasa Web Albums" will be presented by Jerry Hess from SHCC. Jerry might be showing you the solution to getting your pictures on the web to share with family and friends. See this demo to find out what you might do.

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:

Family Tree	Rick Schummer
Firefox	Don VanSyckel
FoxPro	Rick Schummer
Internet Explorer	-
MS Publisher	Rick Kucejko
MS Word	Rick Schummer
WordPerfect	Jim McNeil
Spreadsheets	Rick Schummer

SHCC Coordinators:

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Net/Comm. SIG	Betty MacKenzie
Door prizes	Sharon Patrick
Greeter	Lindell Beck
Newsletter publisher	Rick Kucejko
Novice SIG	Don VanSyckel
PC SIG	Jack Vander-Schrier
Program Coordinator	Jerry Hess
Publicity	Patrick Little
Resource People	open
Vendor Press Rel.	Jim Waldrop
Web Page	Don VanSyckel

2007 SHCC Officers

President: Don VanSyckel   V. President: Ron Frederick
Secretary: Pat Little   Treasurer: Ed Trombley

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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Don VanSyckel	586-731-9232	don@vansyckel.net
Jack Vander-Schrier	586-739-7720	jvanders@myself.com

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

FEBRUARY 2007
6 - SHCC– "Your Photos on the Web with Picasa Web Albums" by Jerry Hess of SHCC
7 - COMP meeting
11 - SEMCO meeting
12 - Net/Comm SIG
22 - Novice SIG
3/1 - PC SIG

MARCH 2007
6 - SHCC– "Email Clients, What You Need to Know and Don't" by Don VanSyckel of SHCC
7 - COMP meeting
11 - SEMCO meeting
12 - Net/Comm SIG
19 - Novice SIG
28 - PC SIG

APRIL 2007
3 - SHCC– "Home networking, wireless access points, and all that stuff, part 3" by Don VanSyckel of SHCC
4 -COMP meeting
9 - Net/Comm SIG
8 - SEMCO meeting
16 - Novice SIG
23 - PC SIG

MAY 2007
1 - SHCC– Main Meeting
2 - COMP meeting
6 - SEMCO meeting
14 - Net/Comm SIG
24 - Novice SIG
30 - PC SIG

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: ArvinMeritor   Complex, 2135 W. Maple Road in Troy, across from Troy Motor Mall; 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 for residents to join or attend meetings. $150 fee for non-residents
Reciprocating: No

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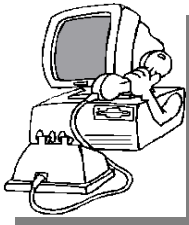   WYSIWYG Publisher
   5069 Fedora, Troy, MI 48098
OR at the e-mail addresses: newsletter@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

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SIG Meetings

Net/Comm SIG

The next meeting of the Internet/Communications (Net/Comm.) SIG will be Monday, February 12, 2007, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library. The SIG meeting days are generally the second Monday of the month.

Each month the members of the Net/Comm SIG discusses topics to help members of the SHCC learn more about the Internet. This month we will be talking about Internet browsers – Firefox, Opera, Netscape, and IE 7.

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

Novice SIG

The next meeting of the Novice SIG will be Thursday, February 22, 2007, starting at 7:00 PM at the Macomb County Library.

We are using WinXP as the version of Windows to focus on. Since we are dealing with novice topics, virtually all of the information is directly usable by whose using other versions of Windows, Win98, WinME, and Win2000. For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Don VanSyckel (phone number is on page 2), or check the club web site.

PC SIG
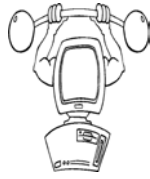
The next meeting of the PC SIG will be on Thursday, March 1, 2007, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library. The SIG meeting is generally the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Intermediate level topics are discussed, aimed at users with some knowledge of computers. Questions and answers regarding your computer will be discussed as always.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Jack Vander-Shrier (phone number is 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.

Resource Person Coordinator

The club is looking for a "Resource person Coordinator". There is a list of people to call for help on various topic (see page 2). This coordinator position involves looking for people to fill in call support positions that become vacant. If you are interested in doing this function, or have questions about the position, talk to Don VanSyckel.

Club Record Changes

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

Advertising Space in the WYSIWYG

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

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

If a club meeting is canceled an email will be sent to members by an officer or the coordinator if a SIG meeting at least an hour before the scheduled start of the meeting. If you have an issue with your email call one of the officers of the coordinator of the SIG. Don't call too early, the decision might not be finalized yet. All members are encouraged to keep the club up to date with their email address.

SHCC Business

"Ask The Experts"
by Jack Vander-Schrier

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:

Right now I am using a free firewall and antivirus program to keep my computer safe. Microsoft has a new program called Windows Live One Care. Should I dump my free program and install this program?

Ready to Change

A: Dear Ready:

I installed Windows Live One Care when it was in beta and initially it worked pretty good. Since then Microsoft has updated its XP software and the program stopped working. I have uninstalled the program and reinstalled it many times and have not been able to install it again. After working with Microsoft Tech Support people over 20 hours on the phone, I have decided to remove it once and for all and go back to the free programs.

Wait until the bugs are worked out of the program and maybe sometime in the future you may want to try it again when version 2.0 comes out. Remember that version 1.0 is the first time out in production and there are bugs in any new program.   My favorite saying is Pioneers get all the arrows.   Stay away from One Care for the time being.

Expert

Q: Dear Expert:

I have been involved with computers for quite some time and all my relatives call me and ask for help with their computers. I am tired of hopping in my car and going to their houses to fix something in their machine. It usually turns out to be some setting that they did wrong. Since they all have Internet access, is there an easy way for me to help them without leaving the house?

Tired of Running

A: Dear Tired

I have used a program called Logmein for the last year. You can download it for free at www.logmein.com . All you have to do is have your relatives sign up for the free service have them give you their username and password and you can log into the machine and fix it without leaving your house. It's a great program and it works so much better than Remote Assistance.

Expert

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Door Prizes

The SHCC offers door prizes at most regularly scheduled club meetings. The door prizes for the February meeting were not known at the time of publication. In January, the coveted winner's circle included:

Paul Baecker won Zoo Tycoon Suite

Jerry Combs won Faster, Smarter Office

Syl DeLellis won a Clip on Copy Holder

Rob Frederick won a T-shirt

Jan Gaulin won a Sticky Note Pad

Paula Gralewski won Jelly Cell Mate

Jerry Hess won Snagit Screen Capture Program
Bruce Honeck won a PC World CD

Nona Jarboe won Jelly Cell Mate
Kenney, Harry won a T-shirt

Cliff Miller won Jelly Cell Mate

Ralph Osinski won a MS T-shirt

Dennis Palazzolo won aSmart Computing Magazine Issue

Sharon Patrick won a MS Office System Manual

Frank Podolski won MS Works Suite

Carole Polus won an Office Manual

Phil Reynaud won a Phone Holder

Marshall Steele won a Program Disk

Paul Thorne won a HP Print Kit

Ed Trombley won a Clip on Copy Holder

Basile Valtadoros won a T-shirt

Jack Voyles won a T-shirt

Jim Waldrop won Jelly Cell Mate

Carl Witkowski won Jelly Cell Mate

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Last Month Meeting

SHCC member Rick Schummer presented "Screen Shots and More with SnagIt by TechSmith". Rick did an informative and interest job covering the many SnagIt features.

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Presenters Wanted

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

If there is some software you have been using and think others may be interested as well, or there is a computer topic you would like to present to other members, please call or e-mail Don VanSyckel. Making presentations is not that difficult. The hour goes by before you know it and there is always enough material to cover in a software package so that the hour is easy to fill.

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

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Smart Computing Reminder

If anyone subscribes or renews Smart Computing Magazine or associated magazines, they should mention SHCC so the club gets credit. We will get free subscriptions to give away if people do this.

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Michigan Computer User Magazine

The "Michigan Computer User" magazine has not been available at club meetings for a few months.

The publisher has changed its distribution channels, and it is no longer provided in bulk to computer clubs. It can still be picked up at high-volume booksellers, like B. Dalton's and Little Professor, though.

Free mail subscriptions are available in select U.S. cities. Fortunately the Detroit area is one of these locations. Club members who wish to receive the magazine may have a copy delivered to their "business address" by subscribing with the form at:
http://www.computeruser.com/
about/subscribe/compsub.php.

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SHCC Post Office Box

After 9-11 some of the rules have been changed concerning post office boxes. These changes are intended to make it more difficult for persons using post office boxes to remain anonymous, at least to the post office. If you send anything to the club's PO box don't put a person's name on it. It's OK to use titles such as President, Treasurer, and such. If you use a person's name, your mail will sit at the post office until that person can get to the post office with ID and claim the mail. This just slows down you mail and inconveniences the addressee.

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

The Changing Face Of Digital Photography
by Jerry Schneir, a Member of the Los Angeles Computer Society
jerrynrita(at)verizon.net http://www.lacspc.org

What to Buy in a dSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) Camera

When Canon first introduced their dSLR – the Digital Rebel (EOS-300D) in 2003, it was an earthshaking event insofar as digital photography went. They broke the $1000 barrier and allowed rank amateurs to enjoy (and to be frustrated) by dSLR. Up to that time digital SLRs were priced well above $1500. If you wanted something a little bit more advanced, it could easily cost $3,000 or more, and more was the operative word.

Then along came Nikon, Minolta, Olympus and Pentax with dSLR cameras all priced south of $1,000. Now, be prepared for dSLR cameras just slightly more than $500 and with features that rival their semi-professional big brothers, and in some cases with features their big brothers do not have, such as image stabilization built into the camera itself and not the lens.

Last year and this we have seen mergers and cooperative efforts between big camera and electronic companies. Look at Sony taking over Konica-Minolta and producing the Alpha 100 (priced at $999); Olympus and Panasonic merging technologies and producing a whole line of very different cameras at a wide variety of prices ($699 all the way to $1999 for the Panasonic). Then Pentax/Samsung introduced a whole range of cameras from $400 to $800 (street price with and without lens).

And now, along comes Canon with their new 10MP Digital Rebel XTi with a host of interesting features at a very attractive price of $799. Nikon also announced their new D80. Other lower priced models are sure to follow. If one is to believe all the hoopla, digital SLRs are selling big time and most manufacturers think they will outsell the point and shoot variety (those with 4x or less of optical zoom) within a few years. And now comes the dilemma for those who still have their film SLRs and collections of lenses. What to do, and what camera to buy?

Just because you have three or four good lenses for your SLR doesn't justify buying the same brand just so you can use your existing lenses. First off, you may NOT be able to use your existing lenses in a digital camera of the same brand (lens mount). If some of your existing lenses are 3rd party lenses, i.e., lenses made by Sigma, Tamron, Tokina, etc. they may or may not work well or at all with the digital SLR version. Sigma lenses from 5+ years ago have a tendency to produce the dreaded ERR099 message when placed on a Canon digital SLR. These lenses must be updated by Sigma. A new chip has to be installed in the lens. Unfortunately, Sigma may not have the chips needed so you may be out of luck. If you are buying a camera because you have lenses that will fit it, make sure they work. Bring ALL of your lenses to the store and try them in the camera.

Turn the camera on and go through all the shooting modes.

And then there is the "focal length multiplier" problem. On most Canon cameras the multiplier is 1.6. Thus a 50mm normal film lens becomes an 80mm lens, a 75-200mm zoom lens becomes a 120-320mm lens, and a nice wide-angle 24-50 zoom becomes a not so interesting 38-80mm zoom. On most Pentax and Nikon brands the multiplier is 1.5 while on the Olympus/Panasonic the factor is 2x.

This writer thinks that Panasonic misread the photo market with the $1999 camera. I think we shall see a much more attractively priced camera from them under $1000, probably around $800. Panasonic as well as Sony have a strong vested interest in not producing SLR cameras in the $500-$800 range since they already make a number of very nice SLR style cameras with large zooms and real dSLRs would cannibalize that market. Canon and Nikon both make very expensive image stabilized (shake reduction) lenses and may be loath to produce a camera with built in image stabilization such as being done by Sony, Olympus/Panasonic, and Pentax/Samsung.

So, what is a prospective buyer to do? In my case it was easy. I had already sold all my film and dSLR cameras along with their lenses (e-Bay) so I was starting from scratch. I knew that I wanted image stabilization (I.S.). I had tried it on the Canon S2 IS and loved it. I also knew that Pentax/Samsung was bringing out an image stabilization system based upon sensor compensation rather than the lens. The Sony/Minolta system is similar. This meant that all the lenses for those cameras became image stabilized, you could easily get by with far less expensive lenses and the total package would not break the bank.

Then there is the question of overkill. Do you buy a camera with features you

will rarely if ever use, or even have occasion to use? Is it really necessary to have a camera shoot 5 frames per second over one that only does 2.5? What about 10MP versus only 6MP? How many shots can you get in a burst, 2.5, 5 or 10, and how many are really needed? There is very little actual difference in the images taken with a $3,000 and a $500 camera. Do you need a camera with a 150,000 MTBF (mean time between failure) shutter cycle versus one with only an 80,000? The $500 to $800 cameras available today easily rival the $5,000 cameras used three or four years ago, and in many respects they are better.

In my case, I read the ads and found a Pentax *1stDL (6.1MP) on sale at Samy's with a boatload of extras, very usable and worthwhile extras, extras I would have bought in any case. The camera was advertised for $549 (including 18-55 lens) and had a $100 rebate from Pentax which brought the cost down to $449. The freebies (SLIK tripod, 1 GB chip, 300 digital photos, and case) were worth about $150, so my net cost was about $300. No, the camera doesn't have I.S. but Pentax/Samsung just introduced their K100D/Digimax GX-1S (6.1MP - $600 -$700 street price) which does have I.S. and will soon have a K10D (10MP) also with I.S. The DL will become my backup camera when I buy the I.S. version. Of course, should I decide to, I could probably sell the DL for close to what I have invested in it. In the meantime I have had the pleasure (and some minor frustration) of using it, a really nice dSLR.

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.

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To Dual Core Or Not To Dual Core?

by Jim Sanders, Editor, North Orange County Computer Club, California
http://www.noccc.org editor(at)noccc.org

If you have been in that should I or shouldn't I mode for a while, now is a pretty good time to make the plunge. The prices of dual-core processors has come way down in the last year, at the same time the performance has moved several rungs up the ladder. In May, AMD introduced several new high-end Athlon processors. In July, Intel unveiled it's long anticipated Core 2 Duo (AKA code name Conroe) chips. These are Intel's long awaited response to being out-gunned by AMD. They have the new Core micro-architecture that reportedly out-performs similar models of AMD chips

The introduction Core 2 Duo chips by Intel started a price war between AMD and Intel. One sage speculated that this was a strategic move by AMD to make it difficult for Intel to dump a huge inventory of older technology chips without taking a loss on them and lower the profit margin on the new chips. Whatever the case, the end users win. The latest and greatest chips from both vendors are a lot less expensive than they were just a short while ago and the older chips are available at bargain basement prices.

The technology that is in the new chips from both AMD and Intel has been significantly improved in the last two years. Intel has upgraded it's NetBurst architecture with the Core and Core 2 Duo technology. AMD has introduced the new AM2 processor socket which, compared to the older 939/940 socket, effectively doubles the processor-to-memory bandwidth with it's support of DDR2 RAM.

There are a lot of individual engineering pieces or basic building blocks that make up all X86 processors. For years Intel rode the marketing bandwagon that basically touted the "My processor

clock is faster than yours, so I am better than you are" concept and that was, more often than not, true. AMD tried to compensate for the fact that their high speed chip technology lagged behind Intel by building more efficient CPUs. There are lots of ways to do that, and doing more things in parallel (at the same time) is one of the ways to build a more efficient CPU. So if the CPU is doing twice as many things at the same time, the processor clock can be half the speed. To pick a number, lets say the AMD chip actually has a clock of 500MHz but it is marketed as a 1000+ and the fine print explains that it "Performs as well as other CPUs that really do have a 1000MHz clock." A number of people feel that back a few years, AMD was overly optimistic with their "Performs as well as" ratings. The concept however remains true. Over the years, AMD improved the efficiency of their CPUs as well as the clock speeds and the "Performs as well as" ratings more closely matched reality. Once Intel started making chips in the over 3000MHz clock range, they started tripping over the difficulty of making chips run that fast at all, complicated by the huge amount of heat it created. Acknowledging the writing on the wall, Intel decided they had to start making more efficient chips as well.

The irony of Intel running into the wall that those irrefutable facts of Physics represent is that Intel had to borrow a page from the AMD marketing manual. They had to convince their followers that these new Intel CPUs with the slow clock speeds were getting just as much or more work done as the older chips with the impressive clock speeds. Both companies had to deal with the problems created by CPUs that generated as much heat as a 100 watt light bulb. Along with other problems, the size of the heat sink/fan

assembly was getting obscene. The demand for ever increasing compute horsepower, however, was relentless. In addition to improving the efficiencies of their processor cores, both companies decided the next logical step was to build two complete CPUs inside one chip and really approach doing twice as many things in the same amount of time. Because Intel still leads AMD in the ability to build chips with tinier features (65 nano meter vs. 90 nano meter), they can afford to put twice as much cache in their chips and run a higher clock speed and still have a good power consumption rating. By moving the memory controller inside the CPU, AMD has a better multi-core memory scheme. And the technical details, and the debates about them, go on and on.

I am going to try and give you enough of an over-all picture of who is offering what in today's processor world that you can at least determine if you want to try and play in the major leagues or the minor leagues. That is really a daunting task and I hope I come somewhere close to success. One master list of currently offered X86 chips (all of those chips that trace their ancestry back to the original Intel 8086) had nearly 400 different models listed. Most of those are no longer made and ranged in price from $7.00 for a 600MHz Celeron to $954 for a Pentium Core 2 Etreme 3.2GHz and from $17.00 for a 700MHz Athlon Slot-A to $769.00 for a dual core Athlon FX-62 socket AM2, 2.8GHz processor.

There are a lot of very fast single core CPUs available at very good prices. If you are not an enthusiast user (mostly that means gamer) or heavy into video editing, you may not need one of the dual core units. Some of the single core units are the best values (read cheapest) available and any of them that are rated as being in the 3.0GHz or more category should even run the Vista operating system when it is released. Visit the MS Vista hardware

requirement site at http://www. microsoft.com/technet/windowsvista/ evaluate/hardware/vistarpc.mspx and get the official, albeit optimistic, defini- tion of the minimum hardware you will need to run Vista. Based on my experience with the September RC1 release of Vista running on an AMD 2800+ with 1Gig of RAM, I would not be happy with a slower machine.

If you are an enthusiastic gamer or hard core videophile, plan on spending close to a thousand dollars for your CPU. Not to mention the dual $500 video cards and 4Gig of RAM. The first of the three categories of proces- sors that we are going to list is the one that you enthusiasts are interested in.

Those categories are; the Enthusiast Dual Core Processors, Main Stream Dual Cores, and Single Core Proces- sors. There is some overlap in both the performance and price of the high end single core and the low end of the dual core processors. One thing to keep in mind, all of the Dual Core chips are 64 Bit processors and most of the sin- gle core processors are not 64 Bit.

Enthusiast Dual Core Processors
For the AMD processors you have: Athlon 64 FX-62, Athlon X2 5000+. For the Intel processors you have:Core 2 Extreme X6800, Core 2 Duo E6700, E6600.

Because Intel and AMD are constantly jostling each other to claim title to King Of The Hill, it changes hands. For many months, through June of 2006, it was AMD. Then, in July 2006, Intel reclaimed the title. For almost anyone except the well heeled enthusi- ast with a social need to be on the Bleeding Edge, any of these processors would make a great system. As has been the case for years, the price curve for the last three to four speed ranges is geometric in nature. The 2.4GHz E6600 is about 40% of the price of X6800 and provides about 60% of the performance. The same is true for the

AMD pricing.

Main Stream Dual Cores
For AMD – Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600, 4200, 4000, 3800, Athlon 64 X2 S939 4800, 4600, 4400, 4200, 3800
For Intel – Core 2 Duo E6400, Pen- tium Extreme Edition 965 & 955, Pen- tium D 960, 950, 945, 930, 915, 840, 830, 820, 805

On the AMD line you can easily see just one of the many things that can be confusing about the different designa- tions for AMD's dual core processors. There is an Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600 and an Athlon 64 X2 S939 4600. The only visible difference is that one says AM2 and the other says S939. As ex- plained above, the AM2 designation is for the new DDR2 RAM CPUs. AMD uses two different speeds of DDR2 RAM. The DDR2-800 is used with the Enthusiast CPUs and the DDR2-667 is used with the Main Stream CPUs.

Faster memory will, in general, im- prove throughput and is most notice- able on memory intensive applications. Another consideration when trying to decide between the new AM2 socket and the older S939, is the supply and cost of memory. Production of DDR RAM is being reduced while produc- tion of DDR2 RAM is being RAMped up. That means that the price of DDR is going up and the price of DDR2 is going down. You may have noticed the price of the older PC100/133 RAM is almost double the price of PC2700 DDR RAM and I have seen a price for a 1GB DDR2 that was less than the price for the PC3200 1 GB DDR Ram.

Strangely, at the price top of the Intel Main Stream Dual Core line category are the older technology Dual Core models:
D 965 DC Extreme Edition (3.73GHz/775pin PLGA / 1066FSB / 2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) $1075

D 955 DC Extreme Edition

(3.46GHz/775pin PLGA /1066FSB / 2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) $995
D 960 DC Standard Edition (3.6GHz/775pin PLGA /800FSB / 2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) $349.

The E6400 Core 2 Duo Processor (2.13GHz/775pin LGA 1066FSB 2X1MB L2 Cache) at $245 is the bet- ter buy. This is a good example of the seemingly weird pricing that occurs with bleeding edge CPUs. The D955 is $646 more than the D960 which has a faster clock but a slower FSB (Front Side Bus). Even stranger is that the price for the older technology D 955 is more than the fastest Core 2 Duo chip. The oldest technology dual core chips from Intel are the D800 series.

Single Core Processors
After looking at the long list of single core processors that are clocked at 3GHz or greater, I changed my mind about listing them. Instead, I will just repeat the advice about computing needs and price. If you are not into gaming or a videophile, they can make a fine system. I am still using an Intel 3.1GHz P4 with 512Meg of expensive Rambus RAM to produce the Orange Bytes. It works fine most of the time.

The future of computing is going to be 64 Bits for a long time even though it is just now starting to gain traction. Since that is true, if you are going to upgrade at all, going with a dual core 64 Bit CPU is the only thing that make sense if you take a long term perspec- tive. Same thing is true for DDR2 RAM, PCI-Express video, and SATA2 hard disks. So the sweet spot today is a system based on a Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4200, or an Intel Core 2 Duo E6400 and a good 256Meg PCI Express video card. Everything else, your choice.

The Editorial Committee of the Asso- ciation 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 anything. Send your favorite entertaining, helpful or just plain useless sites (a description is optional) 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.

Custom Windows XP themes, fonts, screensavers, wallpaper.
http://themeworld.com

Play classic games online – tetris, asteroids, frogger, more.
http://www.neave.com/games/

Freeware utility that retrieves your Product Key (CD key) used to install MS Windows and Office from your registry.
http://magicaljellybean.com

The Bible displayed through use of Lego building blocks.
http://www.thebricktestament.com

For hockey fans, a vast assortment of sports pins. Artistic, even without purchasing anything.
http://topshelfhockeypins.com

Zoom into a world map to view pics of ports, marinas, lighthouses, inlets, locks, bridges, landmarks.
http://marinas.com

Cute overload – pics of cute animals.
http://www.thingsthatmakeyougoaahh.com

Collection of toll-free numbers.
http://www.hardtofind800numbers.com

Hubble Space Telescope high-quality photo galleries of outer space.
http://heritage.stsci.edu

Don't bother going shopping, just cook with what you have – by the numbers.
http://www.cookingbynumbers.com

A madhouse of movement.
http://blueballfixed.ytmnd.com

Animal photo archive. Hundreds...no, thousands of pics of all sorts.
http://animals.m0.timduru.org

Panoramic view of Mt. Everest.
http://faculty.rmwc.edu/tmichalik/MtEverest.htm

Move mouse left-to-right over picture for time-lapse photos of Toronto.
http://wvs.topleftpixel.com/flash/cntower_timelapse.swf

Display your artistic ability. Paint picture, hang in gallery, view other creations.
http://artpad.art.com

What does 200 calories look like?
http://www.wisegeek.com/what-does-200-calories-look-like.htm

Human world trivia.
http://home.bitworks.co.nz/trivia/human.htm

Follow the instructions for an unusual visual sensation.
http://www.neave.com/strobe/

Free open source planetarium for your PC, showing a realistic sky in 3D ~ what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope.
http://www.stellarium.org

Draw faces by adding facial components together.
http://flashface.ctapt.de

Generate a custom packing list for any journey.
http://upl.codeq.info

Humorous animal photos – select 'Humor', then 'Humorous Animal Photos'.
http://www.all-creatures.org

Humorous turning of the tables on the telemarketer.
http://www.howtoprankatelemarketer.ytmnd.com

Create your own virtual guitar chords or learn to strum established ones.
http://www.chordbook.com

Workout programs with illustrated and animated exercise examples.
http://thetrainingstationinc.com

Design and furnish rooms on adjustable floor grid.
http://roomplaner.alarit.com

Motorcycles of the 20th century – and beyond. 700 pics.
http://home.planet.nl/~motors-20th-century/motors.html

Latest scientific findings from various exploration missions to the Red Planet, including video and photographic galleries transmitted by those missions.
http://www.marsgeo.com

Real time tracking of space station and satellites – military, radio, weather, other.
http://www.n2yo.com

Full-size animal sculptures made of driftwood.
http://www.jansch.freeserve.co.uk
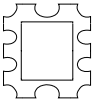
STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

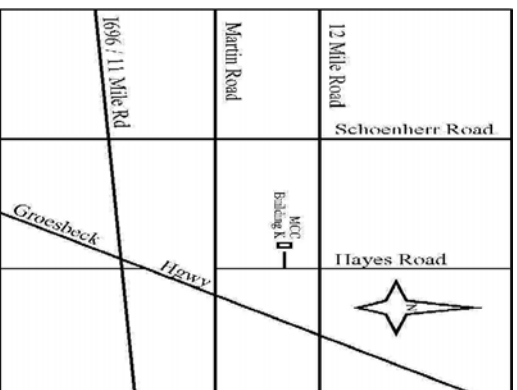PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

FEBRUARY AT SHCC:

TUESDAY FEB 6
Main Meeting. 7:30PM

Macomb Community College
South Campus
14500 E 12 Mile Road, Warren
John Lewis Community Center
(Building K)
(Enter from Hayes Road)

"Your Photos on the Web with Picasa Web Albums" by Jerry Hess of SHCC

SIGs

MONDAY February 12
Net/Com SIG
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

THURSDAY February 22
NOVICE SIG
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

THURSDAY March 1
PC SIG
7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

MARCH: "Email Clients, What You Need to Know and Don't" by Don VanSyckel of SHCC

APRIL: "Email Clients, What You Need to Know and Don't" by Don VanSyckel of SHCC