



mbug-pc newsletter

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Harnessing the Power of PowerPoint

Bruce Wilder, Instructional Technologist at Monterey Peninsula College returns to MBUG to address our June 6 General Meeting. This time he will explain all about **Microsoft PowerPoint 2007**. What's different about PowerPoint 2007? Among other things, Bruce will explain how you can use it to add music, video, and narration to your slide show, distribute your slide show, save your presentations to a CD, e-mail your work, make a PDF, and put presentations on your website.

If that isn't enough, Bruce will also show us how to use other creative aspects of PowerPoint, such as its picture editor, how to prepare schematics, make flyers, use the Photo Album tool to quickly import photos, creatively use animation, and make charts, and he will also give us as many PP presentation tips as he can fit in along the way.

Bruce is an instructional technologist in the **Instructional (Academic) Technology Department** at MPC, where he has been on the staff for 8 years. His job is to help faculty and staff with their tech concerns as they relate to the educational process. He received a Master's degree in Instructional Technology from **San Jose State University** in 2000.

Bruce is well-versed in all aspects of computerized instruction, including hardware and applications, and he has designed and converted more than 25 classrooms to multi-media enabled rooms at the MPC main campus and the new **Marina Educational Center**. He also directs the online portion of the **MPC Distance Learning Program**.

This is a presentation sure to help you stimulate the brain cells and provide you with useful new skills. Questions in advance? Contact Bruce at (831) 760-2259, or e-mail bwilder@mpc.edu. ♦

Is it possible to have

TOO
MANY
FONTS?

(Your Editor thinks not.)

Learn from
Jack Lewtschuk where
to get more fonts for

FREE

on page 3.

Friday, June 6, 2008 at 7pm

**Pacific Grove Adult Education Center
1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove**

**FREE to MBUG Members and the General Public.
Useful discussions, great coffee and snacks, and
smart, creative people!**

Open Volunteer Positions Available Now at MBUG !

Assistant to a Board Director

Back up or assist Programs/Publicity, Newsletter, Hospitality, Membership, etc.

Association of Personal Computer User Groups Representative

More about APCUG at www.apcug.org or e-mail Lee@leekeely.com.


Meeting Reviewers and Columnists

Attend General Meetings/any ongoing workshops; write 500-word-or-less reviews or write a regular column on hardware or software review, favorite website, etc.

Workshop /SIG Leaders

Run workshops or Special Interest Groups monthly/bi-monthly/quarterly.

E-mail or call President **Jack Lewtschuk** at blacklion@royal.net

 (831) 757-0123

MBUG-PC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

S.Jack Lewtschuk	President	757-0123	blacklion@royal.net
Donald R. Slaiter	Vice President, Membership Chairman & Meeting Facilitator	655-4443	slaiter@pacbell.net
Tom Streater	Secretary/Treasurer, & Newsletter Proofreader	657-4249	tom223@pacbell.net
Tony San Filippo	Assistant Treasurer	655-3225	sanfilippof@sbcglobal.net
Regina Doyle	Newsletter Editor	375-4496	reginadoyle@aol.com
Nelson French	Program/Publicity Team & Photographer	626-4551	nfrenchjr@aol.com
Carolyn Lake	Program/Publicity Chairperson & Library Coordinator	643-2023	lakelyn@comcast.net
Charlie Mehlert	Hospitality Team Leader	375-0316	mehlert@sbcglobal.net

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SUBSCRIPTION: See back cover for rates.

MBUG-PC VOLUNTEERS

Jim Anway	Workshop Leader/F1 Help	625-5618	AnwayJ@comcast.net
Joe Asling	Video Project Coordinator	641-9560	jhasling@comcast.net
Bill Baumgardt	Workshop Leader	372-5500	wwb2@comcast.net
Eileen Begley	Workshop Leader	582-9336	eb@spyderbytes.com
Bill Bowles	Columnist	375-3954	B@bowles.com
Norma Cocklin	Canterbury Woods Liaison & Newsletter Proofreader	657-4257	nmchec@aol.com
Joyce Elisha	Video Project Team & Ink Cartridge Coordinator	646-9603	ellias@msn.com
Ralph Games	Meeting Facilitator	394-8876	gamesri@redshift.com
Carole Harris	Hospitality Team	N/A	N/A
Bill Hyler	Photographer	624-4456	hyler@comcast.net
Mack Jacobs	Photographer	394-6975	mackjacobs@comcast.net
Lee Keely	F1 Help	626-8033	Lee@leekeely.com
John Laughton	Legal Advisor	649-1122	john@netlawyers.com
John Rowe	Columnist	384-3617	john@aaawifi.com
Clive Sanders	Advisor/F1 Help, & Membership Consultant	375-5376	simbacli@pacbell.net
Bob Stephan	Historian, F1 Help, Columnist & Workshop Leader	646-1373	stephan.bob@gmail.com
Bill Stockton	Recording Secretary	384-6130	
David Thorp	Video Project Team	373-4623	
Ed West	Webmaster/Listserv Owner	372-6200	captain@mobie.com

NEWSLETTER AD RATES: Special rate for local business card ads (approximately 1/10 page) is \$30.00 for 6 issues or \$50.00 for 12 issues. Full and partial page ad rates are available upon request. MBUG will publish at no charge classified ads for individual subscribers who have computer hardware or software for private sale. For advertising information contact Regina at ReginaDoyle@aol.com.



Benefits of MBUG-PC Membership:
Free Computer Help (see page 11 for details),
Monthly MBUG-PC Newsletter,
and a 15 to 20% Discount on
Computer Books at Borders and
Waldenbooks with MBUG-PC Membership
Card (see Don Slaiter for a card).

THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

S. Jack Lewtschuk
MBUG-PC
Columnist



photo: Mack Jacobs, MBUG-PC

PRESIDENT'S MUMBLINGS

Here I go again ...

If you are *not* subscribing to the MBUG Listserv, one of our great membership benefits (see details on page 6), do me a favor and let me know why?

THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

Congratulations Authors!

In 2006, the world created and copied 161 exabytes (161 billion gigabytes) of digital data. If the information were printed in book form, the stack of books could reach from the earth to the sun twelve times over.

And in the future? The amount of data the world will create and copy will grow by about 57 percent per year to 988 exabytes in 2010. An exabyte is a billion gigabytes ... and that's a lot!

And YOU were contributing authors.

Fonts and More Fonts

If you're looking for unusual fonts for a special occasion, a poster or a greeting card, go to <http://simplythebest.net/fonts/>.

FONTASTIC!

Have Some Time To Kill While Still Learning Something?

Try this website bulging with historic trivia:
www.funtrivia.com/History/History.html

\$NtUninstall FOLDERS in Windows XP

If you go to "C:/Windows," you might find a number of folders named "\$NtUninstall ...".

Here is the story behind this mystery: the files contained within the NtUninstall folder tell your computer how to uninstall a Windows update that you have downloaded and installed. Each folder has a specific name ending in the name of a particular Windows update. If you were to go to "Add/Remove Programs" and select a Windows update to uninstall, the information on how to run this process would come from the corresponding \$Ntuninstall folder.

Some of these files are also related to what Microsoft refers to as "hotfixes" and they can be removed if you aren't planning on rolling back from a hotfix, though it's not entirely obvious which update is which.

You can delete these folders as long as you're sure and you don't expect to uninstall that particular Windows update. Your best bet would be to keep them, but if you're desperate for hard disk space wait for a week or two to ensure that the updates you installed are running fine. Then you can delete the corresponding NtUninstall folder safely.

NOTE: You may also find a file called "\$hf_mig\$." Do NOT delete it!

GOOGLE 411?

Google started experimenting with speech recognition on telephones in 2007 so consumers could ask for local information. Google is asking US callers to dial 1-800-GOOG-411 (1-800-466-4411) from any phone to test a voice-activated service called **Google Voice Local Search**. It is free of charge and available on the experimental **Google Labs** site.

This service gives you access to the same local information you'd find on **Google Maps**. You don't need a computer, or an Internet connection and you don't even need to use your cellphone keypad.

For more information go to <http://labs.google.com/goog411/>.

Again, this service is free and **Google Voice Local Search** can be used from either mobile phones or land



lines. Mobile phone callers can request listing details to be sent as a text message to their phones. Callers dial the Google number and can, for example, ask for a pizza parlor, dry cleaner, or other business by name. The service runs on computers using no human operators. Eventually Google says you will be able to call and make a “voice search” to have general Google results come back.

Google says it is seeking to fine-tune the computerized system to improve how the service recognizes users’ requests. Voice Local Search is available in English in the United States and offers only US local business listings for now. They caution that this is still in its experimental stages, so it may not be available at all times and may not work for all users.

Reminder: New California Cell Phone Laws

New legislation in California regarding the use of cellular telephones while driving was signed into law by the Governor in 2007 and goes into effect on July 1, 2008.

- **The law will make it illegal to use a wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle** unless the driver is using a hands-free device.
- **Drivers under the age of 18 will be forbidden to use cellular phones, text messaging devices and laptop computers while driving.** The under-18 cell phone ban applies regardless of whether the phone is equipped for hands-free use or not.
- **Drivers who violate the law will face an initial \$20 fine and a \$50 fine for every subsequent offense.** California will join Connecticut, the District of Columbia, New Jersey and New York in prohibiting the use of handheld mobile phones while driving.

Unclog Your Printer Heads

If you begin to run low on ink or if you don’t use your printer every couple of days the inkjet heads can clog with slowly-drying ink. Run a test print to see if you notice gaps in the lines or otherwise unacceptable printing. If so, you can clean the heads in a couple of ways: your printer’s “Properties” dialog box probably lets you activate a head-cleaning utility that cleans the heads by forcing more ink out of them. You can save

ink by doing the job yourself, though. Remove the cartridge and clean the nozzles with a clean cloth and rubbing alcohol.

Safe Search and Game Sites for Kids

School vacation is not far off. And as we all know the Internet contains a lot of information both good and bad. Parents and grandparents worry about child safety, both mental and physical, and that’s good. Here are some safe websites:

- <http://kids.yahoo.com/>
- www.askkids.com/
- www.kidsclick.org/
- www.factmonster.com/
- <http://kids.aol.com/KOL/>
- www.funbrain.com/
- www.learninggamesforkids.com/
- <http://funschool.kaboose.com/index.html>
- <http://www.spellingcity.com/>
- www.bigbrainz.com/index.php
- www.millsberry.com/
- www.mokitown.net/mokitown_prehome/home_en.jsp

Take a look. If you have some other good sites that you can recommend, or if for some reason you think anything on my list is *not* suited for children, please let me know!

You Might Be Interested ... and It’s Free!

Free is always good, especially in these economically-challenging times, but don’t download anything unless you feel that you need it (or get a bigger hard drive before doing so).

- http://techsupportalert.combest/46_free_utilities.htm
- www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2704,2260070,00.asp
- www.pcworld.com/article/id,143642/article.html
- <http://computershopper.com/feature/25-free-downloads-you-need-now-200803>

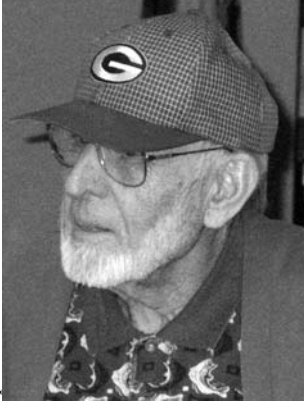
PS

“The super computer is technologically impossible. It would take all of the water that flows over Niagara Falls to cool the heat generated by the number of vacuum tubes required.”

**Professor of Electrical Engineering,
New York University**

THE FRUGAL COMPUTERIST

photo: Nelson French, MBUG-PC



by **Bob**
"I Don't Do
Windows"
Stephan

Recently I noticed that **Office Depot** was having a sale on **SD Memory Cards**. The trouble with the sale was that they came in packs of four at a time and I only needed one for my camera. But it was such a good deal that I looked around for another use for them and found an inexpensive memory card reader that plugs into a USB port. This looked like I could kill two of the proverbial birds with one stone so I popped for the SD Cards *and* the reader. It turned out to be a versatile arrangement.

I can use the reader like a **USB Flash Drive** with any of the cards and I can use the cards in my camera. I can also read my camera card by plugging it into the card reader and don't have to connect my camera to the computer at all. I love it! SD Cards come in many different sizes. The 1GB cards will work for me just fine, but there are considerably larger sizes. A word of caution—the first card reader I bought was an **Ativa** and when I got it home it did not work at all. I checked online and found that others were having similar problems with the Ativa readers. I took it back and got a **SanDisk** reader for just a few bucks more and it works beautifully. I recommend it.

The following article with more information on flash drives is from **Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter** (© 2008 by **Richard W. Eastman**), reprinted here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at www.eogn.com. This version has been edited to fit the space available but the full article is available at the eogn website.



The Care and Feeding of Flash Drives

It's official: the floppy drive is dead. **Dell** and a plethora of other PC manufacturers have simply stopped including floppy disk drives, thanks in no small part to the smaller, lighter, and faster USB flash drive that can carry over 1,000 times the standard 3.5 inch floppy.

In a recent conversation with a newsletter subscriber, I casually mentioned flash drives. These devices are also known as jump drives, thumb drives, USB drives, and probably a few other names as well. The subscriber mentioned that she had purchased a flash drive but didn't know how to use it. This article is for her and probably for a lot of other people who also have not yet used one of these great devices. I am also including information about programs and advanced uses that may be news even for experienced flash drive users.

First of all, flash drives/jump drives/thumb drives are not drives at all. So much for accuracy in naming! These pocket-sized devices contain a tiny circuit board, some amount of flash memory, and some supporting electronics. Flash memory is noted for its storage capabilities; when you turn the power off, the stored data does not disappear. It has been saved in the flash memory. You later can re-apply power and all the data will still be available, identical to what it was when the power was turned off.

Flash drives tend to physically imitate conventional hard drives so that they may act as a replacement for hard drives or floppy drives. When you plug a flash drive into your computer's USB port, it appears in the **Windows** or **Macintosh** operating system as another disk drive. You can write data to it or read data from it in the same manner as reading and writing data to and from hard drives, floppy disks, and CD-ROM disks. Since they are portable and very rugged, flash drives are great replacements for floppy disks and CD-ROM disks. They are smaller, more durable, and have bigger storage capacities than floppies. They are also faster than floppy or CD-ROM disks and often are faster than hard drives. (Speeds may vary, depending on the type of flash memory used.) Many flash drives manufactured in the past year or two have even greater storage capacity than CD or even DVD disks.



I carry a 16-gigabyte flash drive in my pocket most of the time, a unit that I picked up on sale recently at a local computer store for \$59.95. Similar units are available from nearly every computer store, department store, drug store, and other places. A local variety store near me sells smaller capacity flash drives for \$4.95. Sixteen gigabytes is roughly the amount of data stored on 11,000 floppy disks. Not bad for something that is about the size of a tube of lipstick! Try carrying 11,000 floppy disks in a pocket or purse. I suspect you might find even lower prices if you look around long enough; the prices on these things seem to drop weekly.

Unlike normal disk drives, jump drives contain no moving parts. The only thing inside the case is flash memory plus whatever other electronic parts are required to make it work. The entire unit is sealed and is more or less impervious to heat, cold, shock, dirt, or most other physical abuse. They will not withstand extreme abuse, however. I did have one jump drive stop working after I accidentally sent it through the washer and dryer. You'd think that would teach me to empty my pockets before doing laundry. However, a few months later I did the same thing again with the replacement jump drive that I purchased. The second one survived and is still in use today. It also looks very shiny, apparently thanks to the detergent used. However, I do not recommend using **Tide** on all your electronics gear!

Using a jump drive in **WindowsME**, **Windows2000**, **WindowsXP**, **Windows Vista**, or **Macintosh OS/X** is simple: insert the jump drive into your computer's USB connector, wait a few seconds for the operating system to detect it, and then start using it. The jump drive will appear as a new disk drive that is attached to your computer. Jump drives do not work in Windows 98 unless special drivers are loaded first and do not work at

all in older versions of Windows. In Windows, the new disk drive normally appears as the next drive letter in succession. For instance, if your computer has a hard drive that appears as "Drive C:" and a CD-ROM drive that appears as "Drive D:" and there are no other drives, the jump drive will probably appear as "Drive E:". That is the default operation, but it can be overridden. A few jump drives may appear as a different drive letter, but most will appear as the next letter available.

You look at folders and files on the jump drive the same way as you navigate any other drive. In **Windows Explorer**, double-click on the drive's letter to open the "tree" of directories and files. To execute any programs stored on the jump drive or to open any documents, simply double-click on the file name. This is the same operation you would perform on a hard drive, a CD-ROM disk or a floppy disk. You can read files or write files from almost any application in the same manner as any other disk drive. For instance, if your jump drive appears as "Drive E:," you can create a word processing document and then save it as "E:\myfile.doc" or something similar.

One thing that is different is the removal of the jump disk. You should not remove the jump drive while it is in use. You should first close all applications that access the jump drive. NOTE: I must admit that I have unplugged jump drives many times while in use and have never lost data as a result. However, a warning message usually appears and there certainly is a POSSIBILITY of data loss. I suspect that I will lose data sooner or later if I don't abide by the rules, so I do try to remember to follow the recommended procedure.

The correct method is to find the "Safely Remove Hardware" icon in the desktop's system tray at the bottom

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Join MBUG Listserv—send messages to all other Members and have them reach you **securely** (monitored to ensure computer-related, virus-free messages sent by Members only).

Get current MBUG announcements (workshop dates, cancellations, additions), **up-to-date virus and scam warnings**, **ask and answer computer-related questions**, and **make computer-related announcements** (donate, trade, or ask for obsolete stuff).

Register at www.mbug.org or go to <http://listserv.redshift.com/mailman/listinfo/mbug>.

right of the screen. Briefly hold the mouse pointer over each icon there until you see the pop-up “tool tip” that says “Safely Remove Hardware.” Right click on that icon, and then follow the displayed menus to stop access to the jump drive. When complete, a message will appear on the screen, stating that it is safe to remove the jump drive. If you ever encounter a situation in which you cannot stop access of the drive, power down the system and then remove the jump drive. Power up and proceed as normal.

Anyone who owns both Windows and Macintosh systems will be pleased to learn that a single jump drive can be used on both systems. I frequently move files from a Windows system to a Macintosh system and back by using a jump drive. In fact, jump drives also work

with most **Linux** systems as well. A jump drive is also a great way of copying data from a desktop to a laptop system or back again.

[To be continued next month]

Other newsletter readers have already posted many comments, questions or corrections to this article. You can read them at: blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2008/04/the-care-and-fe.html. ♦

Bob “I Don’t Do Windows” Stephan is an OS/2 enthusiast with over 40 years of computing experience.

Send comments and questions for **The Frugal Computerist** to stephan.bob@gmail.com.

Bob’s home page is at www.bobstephan.net.

iLOVE IPODS with Hillary Bennett



photos: Nelson French, MBUG-PC



MBUG Members and Guests with President Jack Lewtschuk (top), and rapt members listen to Hillary (left)

Guest Speaker **Hillary Bennett** (above) provided music to the ears of eager MBUG General Meeting attendees in May when she explained all things **iPod**. Hillary talked about everything possible in her session on these small electronic devices used to listen to, store a large amount of, and play hours and hours of music. We were introduced to the extensive world of **iTunes** (software that helps transfer and play music on iPods) and **iPhones**.

Meeting attendees learned about downloading music and study materials and the basics on how to buy, program, play, and use their computers to manage their iPods.

Hillary has been teaching about computers (both personal computers and Macs), for over twenty years and now teaches at the **Pacific Grove Adult Education Center**.

It was a delightful, informative, and fun evening in which we got our brain cells going by learning something more about computing. Thanks Hillary, and you’re welcome back any time! ♦

VISTA Service Pack 1:

What You Need to Know by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

[EDITOR'S NOTE: If you're already signed up with MBUG's Listserv, you've read many notices and advisories regarding Microsoft's Service Pack 1 for Vista, and have some idea about the difficulties people are having with installing and using it. If you aren't on Listserv, as Jack asks on page 3, WHY NOT? Here's more about what's happening.]

Microsoft recently released **Service Pack 1 (SP1) for Windows Vista**. A "Service Pack" is a rollup of updates, fixes and enhancements. Many techie advisors like to wait to install a new operating system until the first Service Pack is released because it means that the operating system has matured and gotten all the original bugs out.

Microsoft says that this Service Pack includes all updates that have been released since the debut of Vista in February 2007, plus additional improvements and better compatibility with some hardware and software. Two things that may be especially useful for Vista users are a purported speed improvement and native support for 802.11n, the latest wireless standard.

Perhaps You Should Wait a Bit?

While you can surf over to the Microsoft website and download the Service Pack right now, you may not want to. Part of the reason for waiting

is that some drivers, especially audio drivers are currently adversely affected by SP1. While this problem can usually be easily rectified by reinstalling the problem driver or changing default settings, most average users will not want to encounter these problems.

Microsoft realizes that there are some problems with the Service Pack and it is making some moves to make sure that this Service Pack is well received rather than a poke in the eye for Vista, which has already received quite a bit of bad publicity.

These moves include the fact that Microsoft won't begin the automatic rollout of the Service Pack via Windows Update until next month. Microsoft has also added some detection code to its update service that will block you from deployment of SP1 if your computer's drivers will be adversely affected. You will only be offered the update if your system can handle it.

So the best policy for most users is to just sit back, relax, and wait until the Microsoft Update offers you the SP1 download as part of their update process. If you have been doing automatic updates through Microsoft, you already have most of the important security updates, so there should be no rush to install Service Pack 1. However, some future software may require SP1, so you will want to install it at some point in time.

Praises and Problems

Although some technology reviewers are singing praises for the Vista Service Pack, it is not

completely without problems. A small amount of third party software is adversely affected by this Service Pack. It should be noted that this is not unusual for a Service Pack, since it often makes changes to the core operating system. The list of software that has incompatibility or reduced functionality with SP1 is mostly obscure or old software. Yet, when it comes time to install this Service Pack, you might want to check the Microsoft list of incompatible software at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/935796>.

As with any important update, you will want to properly prepare your computer before you start the installation. First, backup any important files. If you don't already have a backup system in place, click on the Start button and type in backup to start the Vista backup utility. Remember that the safest place to backup is to an external drive rather than to the internal hard drive.

Then, check your hard disk for errors. Double-click on the computer icon on your desktop, right-click on the main hard drive icon, which is usually "C: Select Properties," then on the "Tools" tab, click "Check Hard Disk for Errors." You may also want to check with your computer manufacturer or hardware vendor to see if you need any updated drivers for Service Pack 1.

Last But Not Least, Give Yourself Plenty of Time

The update can take several hours!

Free Support Available

Luckily, in an effort to make this go smoothly for everyone, Microsoft is offering free support for the

SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS

installation of Vista Service Pack 1. As far as I know, this is unprecedented. And it is very welcome. Email, chat support, and even phone support is free for problems related to the compatibility and installation of Service Pack 1 until March 18, 2009.

You can find these free support options and information at the Microsoft Vista Service Pack 1 website (<http://tinyurl.com/2q4xrk>). Be sure to save this address just in case you need it. Although this free support is available to everyone, it is not being highly publicized. ♦

www.compukiss.com and
sandy@compukiss.com

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MBUG LIBRARY

New Additions

The iPod Book:

Doing Cool Stuff with the iPod and iTunes Store by Scott Kelby, Peachpit Press, 361 pages

Visual Design for the Modern Web by Penny

McIntire, New Riders/Peachpit Press, 352 pages

Layers: The Complete Guide to Photoshop's Most

Powerful Feature by Matt Kloskowski, Peachpit Press, 255 pages

Megapixel Count

Megapixels measure resolution, or how much detail your camera can capture. Each megapixel consists of 1 million pixels (the tiny colored dots that combine to make up a complete photo). To decide how many megapixels you need when buying a digital camera, consider what size photos you'd like to print. No more than 5MP are necessary to print 8- x 10-inch images. With a 6MP camera, you can print quality 11- x 14-inch photos. An 8MP camera is capable of producing poster-sized prints. These are only guidelines, however, because your printer also plays a role in how well your photos turn out. Printers with a higher resolution (expressed in dpi, or dots per inch) will generally produce higher-quality prints than printers with a lower resolution.

Size It Up

Finding a high-definition television set that works in your room is a crucial part of your purchase. A small room and a couch near the TV means

MBUG Members can contact
**Library Coordinator
Carolyn Lake** at 643-2023 or
lakelyn@comcast.net in order to:

- Check out MBUG Library books for one month
- Suggest additional Peachpit titles for the MBUG Library (see book list at www.peachpit.com)
- Earn a free Peachpit book for your very own simply by writing a book review for the MBUG-PC Newsletter

you should invest in a fairly small HDTV; a larger space with plenty of seating for friends and family requires a bigger screen. Use the three-to-five rule to calculate your optimal screen size. Measure the distance, in feet, from your TV's location to your viewing position. Multiply that number by three, and then by five. Those numbers represent the minimum and maximum screen sizes, measured in inches diagonally, for that space. For example, a 10-foot span from your TV to sofa will accommodate screens between 30 and 50 inches.

Medusa Goes to the Salon

The cords, cables, and wires behind an entertainment center can be tough to keep clean. Oftentimes, they're tangled together and so close to the wall that the only the cat dares to venture back there. Prevention goes a long way here: use cable ties, wraps, or guards to keep things organized and free of dust. When it comes time to clean, first unplug your TV and any other devices from the wall to avoid a shock. (This may cause some of your components to reboot, so it's a good idea to jot down any special settings so you can reset them later.) Use a rag to remove as many dust bunnies as possible. Finally, use a vacuum with an extension hose to carefully sweep underneath and around the cables.

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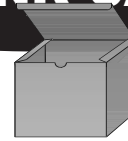
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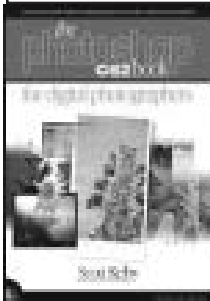
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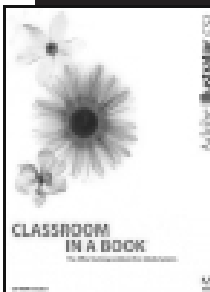
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Want to know more?

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Jack Lewtschuk

blacklion@royal.net



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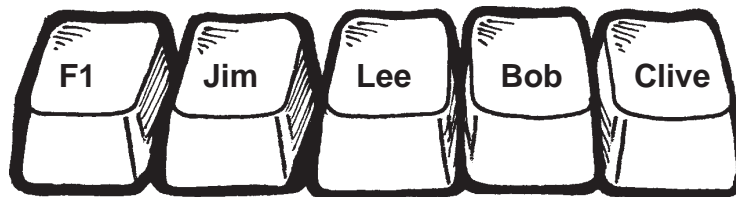
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You know you push the 'F1' button on your computer when you need help. But do you also know that you can call or e-mail **MBUG-PC "F1 for Help"** with your computer questions?



Our expert team of F1 Volunteers will share their experience on software and hardware. To get computer help:

- (1) Contact any of the people listed below; or
- (2) Ask questions during any MBUG-PC meeting break or Q&A session; or
- (3) Leave **Don Slaiter** (831) 655-4443/657-4154 a message; or
- (4) Broadcast a message to all members through the **MBUG-PC Listserv** mbug@listserv.redshift.com **in plain text only** (NO html, please)!

■ Jim Anway

STRICTLY Wednesdays & Fridays
from 2pm to 5pm at 625-5618

■ Lee Keely

Prefers e-mail at Lee@leekeely.com
or call 626-8033

■ Bob Stephan

e-mail to stephan.bob@gmail.com
or call only between 9am-5pm
646-1373

■ Clive Sanders

e-mail to simbacli@pacbell.net
or call only between 1pm to 9pm
phone (831) 375-5376 ♦

Services are free of charge

(with the understanding that MBUG-PC, its Board of Directors, and the F1 Volunteers themselves are in no way responsible or liable for the accuracy or the outcome of any advice or suggestions!)

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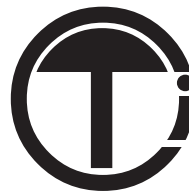
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Retired IBMer

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- (2) Contact, or tell us about, suitable vendors from whom MBUG might get raffle items.
- (3) Save your lottery ticket money and buy lots of tickets at raffles! All proceeds benefit our educational activities.

**(Items will be sorted for the raffle, the "freebies" shelf, or responsible recycling)*

The Big DTV TRANSITION

by **Sister Dorothy
Robinson, OSB**

Newsletter Editor,
Olympia Microcomputer
User Group, Washington

Computer users often speculate about how digital technology will affect us and our world. We are now entering the final stage of a rather large digital transition, that of digital television signals. Didn't know this transition was going on? You're not alone.

On February 16 an Associated Press article on the digital television transition said that in about a year, all analog TV broadcasts will end in this country. If a TV doesn't have a digital tuner, or isn't connected to cable or satellite or other paid services, it will need a converter box to receive and display digital signals. About 13 million households would be affected. This is because analog tuners can't decode and display digital signals.

Options for continuing to receive TV signals after February 17, 2009 are to buy a digital converter box (\$40-50, according to this AP article), a new TV with a digital tuner, or get connected to a paid service. The Federal Government is offering \$40 coupons, up to two per household, good on the purchase of a converter box. You can call 1-888-388-2009 or apply online at www.dtv2009.gov, with an option online to print out an application and mail it in.

According to www.9wsyr.com, "You will still need an over-the-air antenna in addition to the converter box to receive a digital signal on your analog television set. Your current antenna should work the same as before. Many major chains have been certified to sell the converter boxes, including **Best Buy, Circuit City, K-Mart, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Sears, Radio Shack and Target.**" Best Buy, according to centredaily.com, "will stock an Insignia-branded analog-to-digital converter box exclusively, retailing at \$59.99." PRNewswire.com said, "Converter boxes at \$49.97 are on shelves now at Wal-Mart already." And according to radioshack.com, you can find a **Zenith** converter in stores for \$59.99. It is looking like the difference between the price of the converter box and the coupon will be \$10 and up.

The reasons for the changeover are to allow auctioning off excess airwaves (digital broadcasting is more efficient so there will be an excess), for new wireless services, and possibly providing emergency air networks for disasters. Digital signals can also provide better picture definition—but depend on whether high definition programs are being broadcast and if TVs can receive HD.

From **How Stuff Works** (<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/hdtv1.htm>), comes this information: "Some people believe that the United States is switching to HDTV—that all they'll need for HDTV is a new TV and that they'll automatically have HDTV when analog service ends. Unfortunately, none of this is true." If you want more information

on how HDTV works, check this site.

The government website (www.dtv.2009.gov) has this to say about the reasons for the changeover: "Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders." It says nothing about auctioning off air wave spectrum or the intricacies of HDTV.

The Benton Foundation (www.benton.org/index.php?q=node/1257) has information on the background and time-line for DTV transition. It states, "Digital television (DTV) is a new, more efficient technology for transmitting and receiving broadcast television signals. But DTV signals are not compatible with today's analog TV sets in most American homes. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the amount of spectrum given to television station owners was doubled. The policy rationale for this was to enable the stations to transition US consumers to digital TV without interruption of analog broadcasts. But after ten years of digital TV broadcasts, only a small number of US households have made the switch to DTV, delaying the return of valuable spectrum that could be used by emergency officials and auctioned to offset federal deficit spending."

Included in benton.org's time-line called **Getting to February 2009: Implementing the Digital TV Transition**, is this step: "January 28, 2008 The FCC must conduct the auction of the licenses for recovered analog spectrum, commencing the



bidding no later than this date, and is to deposit the proceeds of the auction in the US Treasury no later than June 30, 2008.” In other words, this is happening right now, if things are proceeding on schedule.

In January 2006 *CNN.com* (http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/04/technology/pluggedin_digitaltv/index.htm) said: “Once TV stations switch to digital transmission, they will return to the government a big chunk of the radio spectrum they currently use to transmit their analog channels. Some of that spectrum will go to first responders—police, fire and public safety officials—so they can better communicate with one another. Breakdowns in emergency communication slowed the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. New spectrum should help. The rest of the spectrum will be auctioned off to the highest bidders—probably tech companies. The sale of this valuable, scarce real estate is expected to bring in about \$10 billion, maybe more. That will help reduce the federal budget deficit.”

CNN also talked about the new technology and services that will likely be developed using this increased air availability, for example, cheap wireless broadband access virtually everywhere. Referring to an historical parallel, it states: “Scheduled for 2008, the auction will be the biggest spectrum sale since a 1994-95 spectrum auction. That sale helped boost the mobile phone industry, boosting the number of cell phone subscribers in the U.S. from 24 million to 200 million. It also helped drive down the cost of wireless minutes from an average of 47 cents a minute to 9 cents a minute, according to analysis from financial services firm Stifel Nicolaus.”

Whether we like it or not the DTV revolution is on its way. The best we can do is prepare ourselves. For many of us the \$10 or \$20 needed to buy a converter box is not a problem. Unfortunately, some people on fixed or low incomes will find it very difficult to get ready for the change. For them, the TV screen may go dark at midnight on February 17, 2009. ♦

www.oly mug.org and newsletter@oly mug.org

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JUNE

NETWORKING & SECURITY SIG 4

**Jeff Helms
& Joe Asling**

SIG Leaders

Wednesday, June 25

7:00 to 9:00pm, Canterbury Woods, PG



Formerly “Home Networking,” this Special Interest Group has been renamed due to many issues about security. **Jeff** (Electronics Technician, National Weather Service) and **Joe** (MBUG Video Projects Director), will continue the discussion with a meeting about backing up a home network, bridging (connection of two or more groups of components), and DNS lookup (to determine gateway IP addresses for each router in the mix).

For a good review of previous meetings, see Joe’s “*Wired Home Networks*” article (*MBUG Newsletter*, May 2008). At the May SIG 3, Jeff discussed using resources, such as www.opendns.com and www.home-network-help.com. The latter site is beautifully organized around FAQ’s and topics on network setups (with useful diagrams), hardware descriptions, troubleshooting, and much more. Jeff also put out a list of web resources on the members’ listserv on March 4—check your e-mail—which he also covers at the meetings.

Users are invited to share their experiences and bring their questions. If you have any ideas or SIG discussion suggestions in advance, contact Joe at jhasling@comcast.net or Jeff at kook@mbay.net. ♦

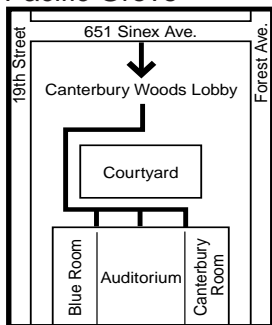
♥ **RUN YOUR OWN SIG!** ♥

Second and fourth Wednesdays are available for **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** which focus on a specific computing topic. Present topics and introduce speakers of your choice and interest. Contact MBUG President **Jack Lewtschuk**, at blacklion@royal.net or Program & Publicity Chairperson **Carolyn Lake**, at lakelyn@comcast.net. We’d love to hear from you! ♦

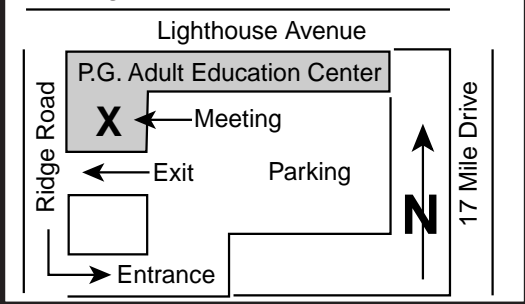
MBUG-PC Calendar of Events - JUNE 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i>	4	5	6 <i>"Harnessing the Power of PowerPoint"</i> Adult Ed Center PG 7:00 to 9:00pm Bruce Wilder	7
8	9	10	11 <i>This date is available for a SIG*</i>	12	13	14 FLAG DAY
15 FATHER'S DAY	16	17	18	What's a SIG? How can you schedule one? See page 16 for details!		21
22	23	24	25 <i>"Networking & Security SIG 4"</i> Canterbury Woods PG 7:00 to 9:00pm Jeff Helms/Joe Asling	26	27	28
29	30					

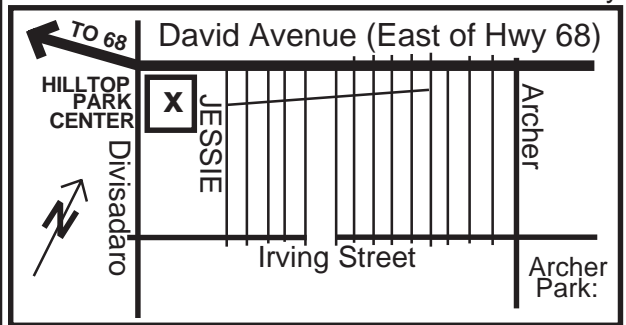
Canterbury Woods
651 Sinex Avenue
Pacific Grove



General Meeting Location
Adult Education Center, PG
1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove



Hilltop Park Center
871 Jessie Street
Monterey



Tentative Calendar July 2008 *Check the June Newsletter for Final Schedule*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5
6	7	8 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i>	9	10	11 <i>GENERAL MEETING</i> <i>Topic/Speaker to be Announced</i> Adult Ed Center PG	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 <i>This date is available for a SIG*</i>	24	25	26
27	28	29 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i>	30	31	PLAN AHEAD! Friday, August 1 "Smart Computing Publications & Services" with Matt Engler (details page 16)	



mbug-pc newsletter

Vol 27, No 6, June 2008

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Don Slaiter
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AUGUST

SMART COMPUTING

Matt Engler

Guest Speaker

Friday, August 1

7:00 to 9:00pm,

Adult Education Center PG



Matt Engler will run us through a current issue of **Smart Computing**, explain *SmartComputing.com* with a live demonstration, and introduce us to **PC Today, First Glimpse, Reference Series**, and **Computer Power User**. He'll explain how to get unlimited computer support from **Smart Computing User Group Program**. All attendees get free packets of Smart Computing goodies with a chance to win more stuff. Mark your calendar—it's the smart thing to do! Questions? Contact Matt at (402) 458-4702 matt-engler@sandhills.com. ♦