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# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER

## President's Message

### Beware the Ides of MySpace

from Mike Kerwin

This month's missive is inspired by an action of my employer to block access to MySpace.com, based on an extended run of security breaches. The problems are explained in some detail at the following URLs:

1) MySpace under Siege

More trouble in MySpace: The social networking site is now under the threat of two new zero-day bugs ([www.darkreading.com/document.asp?doc\\_id=109216](http://www.darkreading.com/document.asp?doc_id=109216)).

2) MySpace Banner Ad Infects Million Users

A banner advertisement posted on the MySpace Web site may have infected more than one million users ([www.cio-today.com/story.xhtml?story\\_id=111003TRG55F](http://www.cio-today.com/story.xhtml?story_id=111003TRG55F)).

3) New Phishing Worm Slithers Through MySpace

([www.cio-today.com/story.xhtml?story\\_id=022000RB03TO](http://www.cio-today.com/story.xhtml?story_id=022000RB03TO)).

It seems this website for social networking is all the buzz among the technical "au courant" and trendy folks. It has become so popular that it has attracted some of the "wrong people," aka phishers, spammers, and worm breeders. These black hat folks are exploiting known flaws in several applications which underlie the capabilities of Web 2.0. One of the main differences between current content on web pages and earlier editions is the capability for interaction rather than static read-only content, but that opens the door to plenty of potential wolves. I don't pretend to fully understand the nature of all of these attacks, which go under the names of MS Zero Day, XSS, JavaScript embedding in QuickTime files, and flaws in how Windows handled WMF image files. You can read the articles or do a web search to learn more details.

For users such as ourselves, though, this mess highlights an ongoing problem and the necessity to

## Website News

The new CMUG website is up and running (well, walking, anyway) at [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org). Right now, upcoming events are listed, and the Meetings pages are up with directions and maps.

Over the next month or so, I hope to get most of our earlier info posted, including newsletter back issues. If there's something you'd like to see on the CMUG website, please talk to me or another officer at the meeting, or email me at [pjvanbloem@aol.com](mailto:pjvanbloem@aol.com).

constantly guard our computers, identity, and financial records. We need to worry about the unscrupulous folks who may reside next door, across the country, or, as in one of these instances, a Russian language Web server located in Turkey. Yes, it's a crazy world we live in.

I know that I struggle to keep my home and work computers updated for the constant stream of security updates and it feels sometimes like playing the whack-a-mole at Chuck E Cheese – whack one and another pops up someplace else, whack it and still another will appear. I get frustrated sometimes because the "Push" in install updates can interfere with my ability to actually use my computer for something I want to do such as editing reports for my work or playing my favorite game of



## Next General Meeting

Our December meeting will continue our annual tradition of a Holiday Meeting, with minimal business, a potluck supper, and freebie giveaways.

If you don't know what to bring, please check with Sumi Kinoshita, who is coordinating the food. More info on the website.

Wednesday, December 20, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Next Windows SIG Meeting

There is no WinSIG meeting in December; see you in January!

## Inside the Megaphone

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world domination (not at work!).

The situation reminds me of the street signs used in England when a disruption is underway to repair a water main break or other deep problem: "Dig We Must". We all know that to enjoy all the best of the current Web we must keep the infrastructure in place and properly maintained. This means keeping the subscriptions to anti-virus software up-to-date, regularly installing the "Patch Tuesday" downloads from Microsoft, and tending the various and sundry other guardians that we use. These friendly programs have various functions, as there's no all-in-one solution capable of handling the various threats. A recent Q&A I read online asked if a person needed a software firewall if they were using a router which had a hardware firewall. The answer was that the router protected from external attacks but only a software firewall could prevent malicious software from pulling an ET and "phoning home" with data or for more instructions on how to proceed with the takeover.

The worst part of the updating for me is the dreaded reboot, as that requires shutting down whatever I am working on and then having to recreate my workspace. Sometimes the computer literally refuses to do simple tasks such as read drives, open email, or surf the Internet until it gets its "fix". Thank goodness for paper; I sometimes print off what I have open so I can revisit the same sites/documents after the interruption of my work and thought processes. I do hear rumors though that the upcoming Vista from Microsoft will minimize rebooting for patches written to the MS standard. This would be very good news. This would also follow the road taken by the anti-virus folks. In the bad old days each new update required a reboot to fix the Registry files or some other deeply embedded program to lock out the ingenious virus attackers. Now most of the AV updates go quietly about their business with only an occasional need to Reboot.

I don't see an end to this chain of events coming soon. One would hope that the black-hats could find productive jobs and earn a respectable living while leaving ordinary folks in peace and prosperity for all, but then we don't live in a place named Utopia. Another thought is that a growth industry appears to exist for our daughters and sons to become the heroes of the digital age by leading the Cyber-Cops to take on the hackers.

I hope this report is helpful and encouraging to all of you. I, for one, will not be deterred by rain, nor snow, nor dark of black hats from accomplishing my daily forays in to the wild and wonderful world of the Internet. I will endure update pain to achieve Access Nirvana.

### CMUG Business

On to business: Thanks to Art Silverplate for

an insightful program introducing us to Vista, which will be affecting all of us in the very near future.

This month our "presentation" will be socialization the traditional way, face-to-face, rather than the digital age way of MySpace. I look forward to seeing you, and a food item or two, and maybe a family member or two, on the 20th.

Digitally,

Mike



## Windows SIG No Meeting in December

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) usually meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month. However, we usually skip the December meeting because it runs into Christmas. So the next SIG meeting will be in January, on the 23rd.

The SIG focuses on using and maintaining Windows, all platforms. We take questions, present tips and techniques, demonstrate freeware/shareware and even feature some web topics using a little trickery.

- Mike Hayes

## Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed

As was announced previously, Andrew Rein is stepping down from his job as Program Director. So CMUG is in need of someone who can coordinate presentations for our general meetings.

This is not a time-consuming job, but does require a little organization, and facility with email. Andrew had a standard email that he has been sending to organizations and individuals, explaining what CMUG is and asking if they could come and present at a meeting. If you have questions about the workload or are otherwise interested, you might speak with Andrew (or one of the other officers) at the meeting.

Meanwhile, here's what we have planned for the next few meetings:

**January 17, 2007:** Amy Karlson will speak on her research at the University of Maryland on one-handed use of mobile devices, and general interface design issues.

**February 21:** To be determined.

# Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

My wife and I decided to treat ourselves to another cruise and this time we were not disappointed. We chose Holland America's MS Volendam for a ten day southern Caribbean cruise and, unlike our experience on HA's Zaandam, we were happy with the way the Volendam did things. Actually, we chose it mostly for the price, but also because it was Holland America since Carnival had some slightly lower prices for that date.

Our only complaint might have been poor table service at our dinner seating, although they improved toward the end of the cruise. While we've had better food on cruise ships, the food on the Volendam was not bad. I liked the ice cream bar that was open at certain times each day offering four different flavors of hard ice cream, one sherbet and one soft ice cream daily with all the trimmings, and plenty of other deserts.

I was interested to note that all over the ship were stands holding sterilization cream for your hands. Most of them were used voluntarily, but when you entered the dining room, an attendant squirted it into your hand as you entered. I was impressed with their efforts to prevent sickness, and I washed my hands quite frequently.

The entertainment was top notch each evening, always something to look forward to. There was only one evening without entertainment, but that was the big barbecue party by the pool, complete with the ice sculpturing, and the food was great. Even our cabin was a nice size and had a king-sized bed, a nice sofa and chair. That ship had the largest library I have seen, although it was not a really large ship. The captain said the Volendam had been refurbished nine months ago.

I signed up for time at the Internet Café, but working with their machines was a challenge considering the mouse usually didn't work well and the small curser was hard to follow on any computer I tried. They occasionally had discounts on the service. I bought 100 minutes for \$55. I asked if the Internet service would be a freebie when I took enough cruises, using Princess lines as a comparison. I was told no, and that the free Internet service would soon be ending on Princess Lines since this ISP was taking over as their service provider. Some folks found free Internet service at a couple of ports,

but I only found out about it on the ship that night.

Something of interest was that Sprint (our cell phone provider) told us we would be able to use our cell phone in the Bahamas and the US Virgin Islands if we set it to roam, but we were surprised when our phones found the Sprint network when we turned them on in St. Thomas (a US Virgin Island). We didn't have to worry about any roaming charges and had a full signal. A friend had asked us to bring him back some duty-free liquor. Since we knew nothing about prices for it, we were able to call our friend while inside the store in St. Thomas to confirm the best prices. Carrying the heavy bottles around while shopping made it seem like less of a bargain, though!

## Deal Reminder

The Medistick deal should still be good this month so don't wait any longer. Visit [www.medistick.ch/en/contact](http://www.medistick.ch/en/contact) and mention the DealsGuy column in the 'comments' area.

Dave Whittle's discount on the Lenova laptops should still be good. Simply call Lenova's user group inside sales rep, Isaac Williams, directly for help in configuring your system, or to get answers to your questions. Call 1-877-338-4465, Option 1, Extension 6322.

I read an interesting article in Information Week magazine about a sophisticated attack on E-Trade and TD Ameritrade that resulted from identity theft. You might find it interesting: [www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193402954](http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193402954).

I haven't tried the items below and descriptions are in their own words, so do your homework if anything interests you.

## Another Tool for Restoring MS Office Files

Smart PC Solutions Inc. announces the release of Smart Data Recovery, the newest freeware utility to restore MS Office documents, photos, music and many other types of files. You just type a path, and Smart Data Recovery will search for deleted files and folders automatically. Once Smart Data Recovery finds erased files, it shows their name, date, time and attributes.

Smart Data Recovery works with different data storage devices, such as hard disk drives (IDE, ATA, SATA and SCSI), flash cards, multimedia cards, USB drives, PC cards, memory sticks, secure digital cards and floppy disks. It handles





zip files and files on your digital camera. It also restores all files and folders on a disk drive that, according to the Windows notifications, can't be accessed. The utility supports FAT, FAT16, FAT32 and NTFS, and is compatible with Microsoft Windows NT/2000/XP/2003. The program can also remove the data related to deleted files by just clicking the "Wipe" button. Therefore, nobody will be able to recover your personal information and use it in their own interests. The program has a multilingual interface that supports English, German, Spanish, French and Italian.

Smart Data Recovery is free at [www.smartpctools.com/data\\_recovery](http://www.smartpctools.com/data_recovery), but here is a special offer! Smart PC Solutions, Inc. offers user group members a 50% discount on their other software products. It says FACUG there, but all UG members can order. Check out the other utilities by Smart PC Solutions, Inc. at the company's web site: [www.smartpctools.com/products](http://www.smartpctools.com/products).

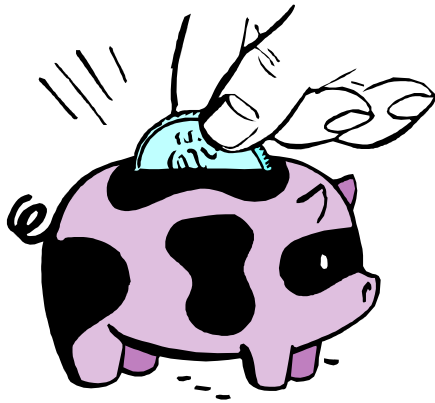
50% discount URL: [www.smartpctools.com/FACUG.html](http://www.smartpctools.com/FACUG.html). [Ed. Note: make sure to capitalize FACUG.]

Mailing address: Smart PC Solutions, Inc., 901 N. Pitt St. Suite 3255, Alexandria VA 22314.

## Help For Your PIM

Copy2calendar minimizes the time and effort to create a calendar entry in a personal information manager such as Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes or Palm Desktop. When you receive an email with the date and time of an upcoming event, you just highlight the text, press Ctrl+C twice, and that's it! A new calendar entry is created. Copy2calendar recognizes all the myriad of formats of date and time that a human reader understands. It accommodates European (day/month/year) and American (month/day/year) conventions. Copy2calendar is able to find date and time specifications in 13 languages including English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and Swedish.

You can easily extract date and time from a wide variety of sources: mail software, web browser, office applications, and with Copy2calendar, you will never forget or confuse time of an event. Copy2calendar runs under Windows 2000/Windows XP. It is free for noncommercial use, but registration



on LoquiSoft is required. Licenses for commercial use are available at \$24.95 (USD). A fully functional 30-day free evaluation version of Copy2calendar is available from [http://LoquiSoft.com/copy2calendar\\_setup.exe](http://LoquiSoft.com/copy2calendar_setup.exe) (1.6 MB).

Product page link: <http://loquisoft.com/copy2calendar>

Email: [werner.noska@loquisoft.com](mailto:werner.noska@loquisoft.com)

Company website: <http://loquisoft.com/index.php?lang=en&page=&sec> [Ed. Note: this is an Austrian company, so their home page is in German. Note the English/Deutsch choice in the upper right hand corner if you find yourself at a page in German.]

## How About A FREE Plugin For PhotoShop!

SibCode has released the newest version of Icon Plugin for Photoshop. This plug-in enhances Adobe Photoshop with an ability to export and import Windows icons (.ico). The use of the plug-in eliminates the need for intermediate files and additional icon editors. In addition to Adobe Photoshop, the plug-in can work with Photoshop Elements, AfterEffects, Premiere, PhotoDeluxe, Corel PhotoPaint, PaintShop Pro, and Painter.

Icon Plugin for Photoshop supports multi-format icons, transparency and semi-transparency, and allows making icons that are compatible with Microsoft Windows XP and Vista. The plug-in also supports non-standard icons of different sizes and color resolutions, including monochrome, 16 colors, 256 colors, 24-bit True Color, and 32-bit True Color with semi-transparency.

Icon Plugin for Photoshop is compatible with all versions of Microsoft Windows and all recent versions of Adobe Photoshop, including 3.0-7.0, CS, and CS2. The product is absolutely free.

Product page link: [www.sibcode.com/icon-plugin/index.htm](http://www.sibcode.com/icon-plugin/index.htm)

Download link: [www.sibcode.com/downloads/icon-plugin.zip](http://www.sibcode.com/downloads/icon-plugin.zip)

Email: [pr@sibcode.com](mailto:pr@sibcode.com)

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

- Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

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# Vista on the Cusp

## A Perspective on Windows Vista

by Jan Fagerholm, via APCUG

I have a confession to make. Though I am a confirmed Linux geek, I have been running Windows Vista. While I tell myself that I am preparing myself for what my clients will be running soon, a lot of the time I spend in Vista is because I like learning new stuff. I've been through the progression of Betas and have arrived at RC2, two weeks before the Microsoft freezes the code and sends it to the DVD burners.

This is not a "review" of Vista as such - computer publications have been running articles on Vista for months - but rather a collection of likes and dislikes that I have gathered while using it for the last year. Don't expect objectivity here - I'm simply going to point to improvements that have stood out or "improvements" that have bit me. These are some of the things you might want to know before plunking down your hard earned plastic for Vista.

On the whole, Vista will swallow the mainstream applications that you are running now. There are exceptions, but these are usually utilities and anti-malware programs that work (as the phrase goes) close to the metal. Corel Graphics Suite X3, WordPerfect X3 and Adobe Creative Suite 2 all run well on Vista (as does the ever-reliable OpenOffice). Roxio Easy Media Creator 9 and Nero Burning ROM 7 fail with installer errors. Present versions of Norton SystemWorks and Executive Software Diskeeper refuse to install. McAfee ViruScan installed, but made Vista unbootable, even in Safe Mode. I had to completely reinstall Vista from scratch.

Here's some of the stuff I've learned to love and hate in Vista, up close, personal and arbitrary, broken into Nits and Picks.

### Picks

- ↳ System Services and system monitors have been folded into Task Manager. Services are included along with processes, finally putting the running system stuff in one place. Expanded monitoring features give graphical information on these items similar to other operating systems, including who's using which process.
- ↳ Removal of some sophomoric terminology, i.e. "My Documents" is replaced with, simply, "Documents", "My Computer" is replaced with "Computer", etc.
- ↳ The Address line in most windows displays the path, the way Macintosh OSX has done for years. Similarly, progress bars show up as a transparent overlay in the Address line like OSX. The path display is interactive, allowing you to go to any point in the path directly as an alternative to "Browse," again like OSX.
- ↳ The Aero theme. It's pretty, and handles transparency intelligently. By effectively fading the

window title bar and frame, it makes the windows contents the focus of what you see. This is one of those small things that have a large psychological effect on concentration. But see Nits.

- ↳ Thumbnail previews of programs in the Task Bar when you move the cursor over them. This is particularly useful if you have several instances of a single program running. You can quickly see which one has the content you want.
- ↳ Mixed feelings about the changes to Security Center. While various security features are better integrated into Security Center (such as Internet Options) and they have more granularity, User Account Control is pure pain. Vista security (like Windows XP security) is both superficial and intrusive compared to Macintosh OSX or Linux.

### Nits

- ↳ They rearranged almost everything. Too little is logical consolidation and too much of it seems serendipitous. After the Start menu (which is also changed) almost everything has been relocated and re-nested. This new organization is supposed to make things easier for the new user, but I don't see how going through more dialogs to get the same thing done is supposed to make things "easier." If you are an experienced user, you can throw away most of what you know about where things are.
- ↳ The Aero theme. While esthetically pleasing, it turns itself off when you run certain applications. It doesn't always come back when you exit the application.
- ↳ The "Flip 3D" window switcher. It's pretty, but it works just the same as Alt-Tab. You must cycle through every window to get to the one you want. This is in contrast to the XGL/Compiz window switcher in Linux, which beats Flip 3D hands down for usability. Macintosh OSX's Finder is also much more direct. Worse, when Aero breaks, so does Flip 3D.
- ↳ Most of the interface windows have replaced menus with simplified toolbars. They are not customizable. Many of the functions I use regularly are invisible. You can get the menus back if you fish around. (Hint - go to Control Panel/Folder Options/View tab and check "Always Show Menus").
- ↳ By default, Vista enables User Account Control in the Security Center. Even if you are the only user on the computer (and thus administrator by default), User Account Control will pop up a dialog every time you (or any software you run) tries to access system areas. This results in several warning dialogs getting in your face while performing many normal actions. Worse, it blocked activation of several programs I installed, stopping the program from running





or crippling it into non-activation mode. (Here's your Top Tip of the Day - you can stop this behavior by going to Control Panel/User Accounts, selecting your user account, then clicking the "Turn User Account Control on or off" link (and clicking the "Continue" button on the warning dialog this feature pops up), un-checking the "User Account Control (UAC). . ." item, then clicking "OK." A reboot is required. This will make Vista work like old-fashioned Windows XP.

↪ We are in for a sea change of hardware and software upgrades that we haven't seen since Windows XP came out. Count on upgrading most, if not all, of your anti-virus / anti-malware software, a lot of your PCI cards, and a lot of your peripherals, especially scanners. Many hardware and software manufacturers are using the impending release of Vista to drop support of a lot of their older products.

### More Thoughts

Vista is almost upon us. While not a compelling upgrade from Windows XP, it is inevitable, because it will be on the next computer you buy. It has some useful and some annoying updates. The revamped interface is clearly aimed at the new user, but it makes the experienced Windows user suffer because it requires relearning things you already know. Vista security is somewhat improved compared to Windows XP, but the fundamental problem remains that security is tacked on to the surface of the operating system, compared to OSX or Linux where security is architecturally built in. If you are considering upgrading to Vista for security reasons, save your money; get equivalent protection for less with security software for the proven and reliable Windows XP you are using now.

Should you upgrade your present computer to Vista? That depends on your hardware and your definition of value. If your computer is more than three years old, you will not enjoy many of the glitzy new features that Vista offers. It wants a lot of CPU and graphical horsepower to run the cool visual stuff. On older hardware, you will get what Microsoft calls an "XP-like experience." Read: you will need to increase your installed RAM and upgrade your video card. While Vista will install in 512 MB of RAM, Microsoft recommends 1 GB minimum for "the best experience."

You will want to invest in an upgraded video card to get the best out of Vista. Video RAM is important; Vista-capable video cards with 128 MB of video RAM and moderate performance are available for around \$50, and well worth the cost if you are moving to Vista. You will definitely want this if you are moving to Vista to freshen your desktop experience. You need it to get all the new toys working.

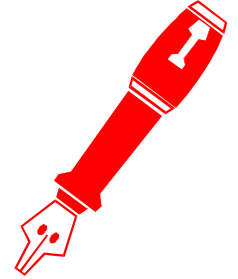
## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

Well, here we are at the end of another exciting year. Hope you all can look back on the last twelve months with some sense of accomplishment.

### Computer Problems

I've been feeling guilty about not doing much with the CMUG website now that it's up and running ([www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)). I've been busy with work and Christmas chores (and I expect I'm not the only one). When I did get some time to start updating the website, my old Win98 PC stopped booting up. (I blame this on AOL insisting on updating itself, but that's another story.)



There's never a good time to have your computer stop working, but I had bought a new WinXP desktop some months ago. I used a KVM switch to allow me to access both PCs from the same keyboard, monitor, and mouse, but hadn't gotten much beyond that. With my old machine unusable, I've set up my router/firewall and



I am not as enthusiastic about Vista as many reviewers are. I have had the benefit of experiencing most of Vista's "new" features, debugged and often better implemented on OSX and Linux. Microsoft rightly imitated these; many of them are useful and compelling. But they are not new.

If you are a computer enthusiast, you will have to decide whether it is worth both the cost of hardware upgrades and the purchase price of Vista to move into the latest and greatest that Microsoft can offer. For the short term, this will not be a painless experience; you will have to make many adjustments to the way you work and suffer several incompatibilities in both hardware and software to get into Vista.

If you are a casual computer user and not certain if overcoming these problems is worth the effort, I'll offer my standard advice for new Microsoft operating systems: wait until SP1 before you take the plunge. For the adventurous, I say, "Follow me, and dodge the slings and arrows! The pain is slight, and I can endure it!" The challenge of making it work is part of the fun. And on the other end, you may find that you can eventually get some work done on the computer . . .

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Jan Fagerholm is the Assistant Editor of the PCCNews, the newsletter of the PC Community user group in Hayward, California ([www.pcc.org](http://www.pcc.org)). He can be reached at [jan-f\(at\)pacbell.net](mailto:jan-f(at)pacbell.net).*





connected my new PC to the Internet. I've also installed some software, but there's a long way to go before I get all the applications I need set up.

I spent a lot of time trying to get my old PC to work, at least well enough to network it and transfer data to my new PC. I finally gave up on that and just physically moved the hard drive to my new PC, and have been copying files off that.

(As an aside, it's nice the way hard drives keep getting bigger. Rather than sort through my old word processing files, I just copied my whole old D: drive to my new machine. Total data filesize was only 3 GB, and my new PC has a 120 GB drive. It's probably just as well that houses haven't been growing as fast, or we'd never throw anything away...)

In the meantime, things are quite messy. I've got a new version of the PagePlus page layout package working, but it doesn't want to import Word files. And getting the printer to work will be a challenge. But at this point, I have updated the website, and the fact that you're reading this suggests that I managed to create a newsletter, somehow.

### Gift Card Drawing

At the December meeting, we'll be having our semiannual gift card drawing. There are five names in the hat this time around:

- ↳ Mike Hayes: for Phishing article in July Megaphone
- ↳ Art Silverglate: for Email Etiquette article in July Megaphone
- ↳ Mike Hayes: for Windows Explorer article in August newsletter
- ↳ Tom Alizio: for DJ Software presentation at September meeting
- ↳ Art Silverglate: for Windows Vista presentation at November meeting

Remember that we'll be having another drawing in June. To enter, just write an article for the Megaphone, or do a meeting presentation, sometime between January and June 2007. For details, just check with a CMUG officer.

### January Questionnaire

As I mentioned at the November meeting, I want to run a questionnaire in the Megaphone to get a snapshot of CMUG members' current computer hardware, software, and interests. But with my computer problems, I haven't been able to put together any questions.

So, look for the questionnaire in the January newsletter. I'll let replies come in for a month or two, so the compiled results will probably be in the April newsletter.

### Wide Screen TVs

Now for something completely different.

I was having lunch with a friend a few months

ago, and he mentioned his family was getting a new Dell PC with a 20" widescreen LCD monitor. Another friend at lunch commented that that was about the same size as his TV, and I realized that was true of my TV, also.

(While I'm on this topic, I checked the Dell website. They have a 17" LCD monitor for \$179, a 19" for \$209, and a 20" at \$270. They also have a 20" widescreen LCD for \$289.)

Later, I was thinking that, at least for TVs, a 20" widescreen is frequently going to have a smaller picture than a 20" normal TV. Remember that the 20" refers to a diagonal measurement from corner to corner. So a 20" widescreen will be wider, but also shorter, than a normal 20" screen. If you're watching a normal broadcast on your widescreen, you get black sidebars, and a smaller picture in the middle.

So I wondered, if I got a widescreen TV, how big would it have to be for me to be sure I wouldn't sometimes have a smaller picture? In the interests of keeping up my Excel skills, I made a little spreadsheet to display the height and width of a given screen measurement.

Here's a table of the results:

Standard TV size	Width	Height
19	15.2	11.4
20	16.0	12.0
25	20.0	15.0
27	21.6	16.2

Widescreen TV size	Width	Height
20	17.4	9.8
26	22.7	12.7
32	27.9	15.7
37	32.2	18.1
42	36.6	20.6
50	43.6	24.5
60	52.3	29.4

(If you're interested, the formula in the Width column for standard TVs is  $(16/25 * S^2)^{0.5}$ , where S is the size of the screen. The height of a standard TV is always 3/4 of the width. For a widescreen TV, the formula is  $(256/337 * S^2)^{0.5}$ , and the height is 9/16 of the width.)

So, my puny little 20" TV is 12 inches high; I would need to get a 26" widescreen to be sure of always having at least as big a picture.

Some years ago, my siblings and I chipped in on a 27" TV for my mom. If we wanted to upgrade her to a widescreen, even a 32" one would be a little shorter than what she has now. Sorry, Mom, no TV this year (well, not one from the kids).

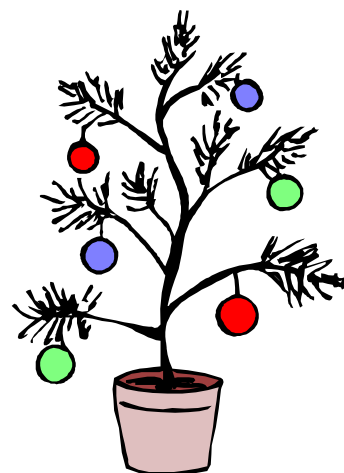
### That's All, Folks

Hope you have a Merry Christmas or other holiday of your choice, and a healthy and prosperous 2007. I look forward to seeing you (and your food!) at the Holiday meeting on the 20th.



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045



Meeting:  
**Wednesday, December 20, 7:30 pm**  
Our annual potluck Holiday Meeting, featuring  
Food, Friends, Fun, and Freebies.

## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

### Membership and Change of Address

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gcoffin3@comcast.net

### Reviews

Send review software, hardware, books,  
and info to:  
CMUG Reviews  
Att: Art Silverglate  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
art.silverglate@gmail.com

### Editorial Copy

Send articles, letters, ad copy, questions,  
and comments to:  
CMUG Megaphone  
Att: Paul Van Bloem  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
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Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),

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General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$30 (cheap!). Membership includes a monthly subscription to the CMUG Megaphone, a membership directory, full access privileges to the Website, and drawings for free and review software at meetings.

CMUG website: **www.myCMUG.org**

