



# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## President's Message

### Chip Wars 2006

from Mike Kerwin

My message this month is an alert about changes that will affect anyone purchasing a new computer in the next 6 months or so. I am working from information published by Ziff Davis on their ExtremeTech electronic publication so you can follow up there for many, many, many more details (about 20 pages of printed material).

Intel: [www.extremetech.com/ article2/0,1558,2049683,00.asp](http://www.extremetech.com/article2/0,1558,2049683,00.asp)

AMD: [www.extremetech.com/ article2/0,1697,2027650,00.asp](http://www.extremetech.com/article2/0,1697,2027650,00.asp)

So what are these big changes? Well you have probably heard about "Duo-Core" technology coming along and actually arriving. AMD has offered this for some time and Intel recently announced their counterpart. What this does is to locate two microprocessors on the same piece of silicon; it's like a Blue Light Special, you buy one and get one free (well you actually pay more, but not twice the price). So, what do you get for your money? Well, for starters, you get entry into the next generation of software, which will shortly be optimized for running on multiple processors. If you use your computer for word processing, email, and web-surfing, you may not notice the difference, but if you venture into current multi-media applications then Katie bar the door, you will need the Warp Factor 2 processing power. I have been recommending for months that anyone buying a new computer wait till these processors became available. I have found myself stuck getting the last model with an older processor and watching the newer ones zoom by a couple of weeks later.

In this case, Intel played catch-up with AMD, which had been reaping awards for speed with their version and their 64-bit processors. Folks were beginning to think that little AMD was playing David to

## Website News

We haven't made much progress on the website. We have space on the APCUG server, and we own the URL "[www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)." Right now, the URL doesn't point to the space, and we still can't upload anything to the space.

Hopefully, we'll have some news on this by the meeting. Stay tuned!

Intel's Goliath. You may have noticed that the press and Wall Street have been delivering kudos to AMD over their progress out of the shadows and into Prime Time. But sleeping dragons sometimes have surprises and this is no exception. While AMD got the first duo-processor to market, Intel has caught up and now seeks to steal a march and be ahead again.

The Intel approach falls under the rubric of "if some is good, then more is better". They have packaged two of their "duo-Core" processors in a single "Chip". (I am a little unclear about some of the implications in the article as the authors state that Microsoft counts sockets rather than processors so MS considers it to be a single processor for some arcane reason. Someone please explain to me what MS accounting has to do with cranking out computing cycles.) They are calling this a "quad-core" but since the two duo-cores are independent, others are calling it something else – maybe a horse of a different color from Oz!



## Next General Meeting

Our own Art Silverglate will present on Windows Vista, Microsoft's new operating system. He'll describe Vista's hardware requirements, the six different versions of Vista, and all its new features.

Wednesday, November 15, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Hacking Your Way Through Windows, Part III

Tuesday, November 28, 7:00 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

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The folks at AMD are not sitting back though, and they have unveiled their true quad-core processor called Barcelona. It will be available in mid-2007. Hence my "Chip Wars" title. But I might also have used "Let the Games Begin" as my title. Because the most immediate use for all of this mega-computing power, at least for consumers, will be in gaming. Dedicated gaming die-hards will pay top prices for faster screens and blaster cannons. The industry is doing so well that they can afford the top notch programmers to take advantage of faster processors.

You can read more at the articles I list above, and I have to finish if this is going to be printed. I apologize if this is short, but the maison de M&M has needed some tweaking lately and it has absorbed much of my time to arrange it all.

Thanks to Hank Volpe for coming out last month and giving a fascinating talk about HDTV and all of the ins and outs of the FCC meddling with our broadcast and cable connections.

This month our own Art Silvergate will be informing us about the upcoming Vista(s) from Microsoft and which versions might be appropriate for which users.

Digitally,

Mike



## Help Needed and Upcoming Meetings

As was announced at last month's meeting, 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. I believe Andrew had a standard email that he would send 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:

**December 20:** Annual pot-luck Holiday Meeting!

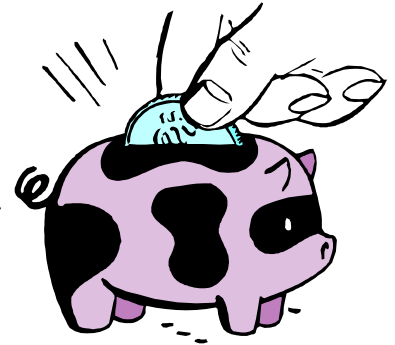
**January 17, 2007:** Amy Karlson will speak on her research at the University of Maryland on one-handed use of mobile devices, and general interface design issues.

## Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

### Here Is Some Fast Food Technology

Technology is fast catching up with vending machines according to this article I read in Information Week. Soft drink machines are everywhere you go, also vending machines for candy, coffee and many other types of products, even machines that dispense ice cream bars and ice cream sandwiches. A technique has now been developed for an ice cream vending machine that does not need to be refrigerated full time. To quote from the article, "we pump the base mix, aerate it, flavor it, flash freeze it, scrape it up off a freezing surface, form it into a scoop and into the consumer's cup in 45 seconds." Also, no refrigeration is required for warehousing. You can read the article at [www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193004764](http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193004764) and it also mentions their use of Linux for the machine.



### Have Your Medical Data with You!

Be medically prepared with all your medical records hanging around your neck (or in your possession) when you are away. Medistick makes a USB flash drive that is designed to hold up to five medical histories. It appears to be a self-extracting file that can also offer password protection. Medistick has a medical emergency logo on the sides. Capacities are available from 128 MB to 4 gigs and costing \$57.00 for the 128 MB size. (See [www.medistick.ch](http://www.medistick.ch). [Ed. Note: the "ch" means the website and company are Swiss.]) Information is collected and entered by you, or your doctor, if his staff will help in that regard, and the document automatically converts to a PDF file.

I doubt I would use the password protection because what if you are incoherent and can't give medics the password to open the file for your medical information? On the other hand, since some folks write their password on the side of their computer, you could do that with the Medistick. <G> I am cramped for space here so be sure to check their website to get the best description of the product. It sure sounds great to me, and so is the deal. All your records are carried with you including all your doctors' names and phones. If you see a new doctor, just give them your Medistick to get all your medical info. With my health, I will probably need the 4 gig model. Just a thought, but this might make a great





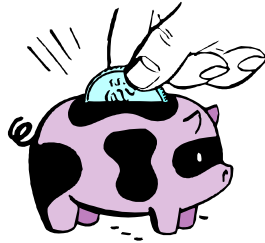
Christmas gift for the person who already has everything, and for that person who has a serious medical history.

Medistick has offered the DealsGuy readers this deal: "One 128MB Medistick and software for 1 person for only \$49.00 with shipping included. (MSRP is normally \$57.00 plus \$3.50 shipping) This deal is good until Jan. 31, 2007. Readers should click on [www.medistick.ch/en/contact/](http://www.medistick.ch/en/contact/) and mention the DealsGuy column in the 'comments' area. They will then get an online invoice from Medistick through PayPal for \$49.00 as payment by credit card in advance."

### Laptop Discount Reminder

Don't forget about Dave Whittle's discount offer on the Lenova Thinkpad laptops that is still good. Simply call Lenovo'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.

Below are some new products that I received announcements for. I have edited the announcements, so check their URL for more complete info.



### How About a Backup with Security!

SoftOptima LLC announces the release of Backup Premium 2.5 backup software. The specially designed protocols SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS provide a high degree of security for data transferred via the Internet. Backup Premium offers the capability to backup user data using SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS and allows substantial safety of the backup process.

You can backup all important files from a Windows profile, Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express and ICQ; running certain programs before or after backup sessions; and the possibility to work with network drives under different accounts. It's easy to configure the backup process and adjust it to the particular needs of a single user, or a whole company. Backup Premium has an ergonomically correct user interface and a high-quality graphic solution that makes the work with the program simple and yet pleasant.

A fully functional Backup Premium 2.5 trial version is available for a 30-day evaluation period. Registration costs \$39 for a single user license. **User group members receive a special 25% discount at [www.backup-premium.com/special-order.shtml](http://www.backup-premium.com/special-order.shtml) until February 2007.**

- ↗ Product Page: [www.backup-premium.com](http://www.backup-premium.com)
- ↗ Screenshots and graphics: [www.backup-premium.com/screenshots.shtml](http://www.backup-premium.com/screenshots.shtml)
- ↗ Download: [www.backup-premium.com/backuppremium25.exe](http://www.backup-premium.com/backuppremium25.exe)

### This Product Helps You Work with Your Pictures

Almalence Incorporated announces PhotoAcute Studio 2.0. PhotoAcute Studio processes sets of images taken in continuous mode. It utilizes super resolution algorithms to convert a sequence of photos into a single high-resolution and low-noise picture that could only be taken with a much better camera. PhotoAcute Studio operates with various camera and image types from mobile cameras to DSLR cameras supporting RAW format and 16-bit color.

Spatial resolution is limited by a camera's matrix and lens, but this limit can be exceeded by means of super resolution that can be done by either acquiring more graphic information (e.g. taking and merging several images of the same object) or by reconstructing the details lost due to the faultiness of the optical system. Noise is the most undesirable factor that degrades image quality. PhotoAcute Studio combines several photos of the same scene, separating the useful signal and the noise, thus providing strong noise reduction without losing the image details. By merging several images taken at different exposures, PhotoAcute Studio expands the dynamic range of the resultant image revealing the details usually clipped in the highlights and the shadows.

PhotoAcute Studio is a Windows-based application. The Macintosh version will be released in 2007Q1. A detailed description of PhotoAcute Studio features, online help and an



## Windows SIG

### November 28: Hacking Your Way Thru Windows, Part III

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month. 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.

This month's topic will be part three of "Hacking Your Way Thru Windows." I also have some neat freeware/shareware to demo if we have time. If you have a suggestion or a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email me at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com).

As usual, we will not have a Windows SIG meeting in December, so this meeting is the last in 2006.

Remember that the meetings are at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org) for maps and directions.

Hope to see you there.

- Mike Hayes



examples gallery are available at [www.photoacute.com](http://www.photoacute.com). You can download a free trial version. The price of the full version varies depending on supported camera types, ranging from \$19 for mobile phone cameras to \$119 for DSLR cameras with the support of RAW format and 16-bit color. User group members get a 35% discount by going to the order page [www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?items=13404-1&ss\\_coupon=DGY-8JQU](http://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?items=13404-1&ss_coupon=DGY-8JQU) which contains the discount code in the URL. The discount will be applied on the second page of the ordering procedure. This discount is good until January 31, 2007.

- ↳ PhotoAcute Studio 2.0 can be downloaded at: [www.photoacute.com/studio/download.html](http://www.photoacute.com/studio/download.html)
- ↳ Product page URL: [www.photoacute.com/studio](http://www.photoacute.com/studio)
- ↳ Direct download link: [www.photoacute.com/files/PhotoAcuteStudio\\_setup.exe](http://www.photoacute.com/files/PhotoAcuteStudio_setup.exe)

### Translate Languages with your PocketPC!

LingvoSoft has released LingvoSoft Translator 2007 for Pocket PC featuring the ability to translate between English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. It provides full-text translation of business correspondence, e-mails, letters, documentation and even the words to your favorite song! If you choose the talking version, not only will you have the fastest translator available for Pocket PC but you'll also be able to use it to speak. With super fast and super smart search functions, a customizable interface and three different ways to enter text, it will even translate the contents of your device's clipboard automatically upon launching the dictionary application.

- ↳ Product page: [www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/?refid=16179](http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/?refid=16179)
- ↳ Company website: [www.lingvosoft.com](http://www.lingvosoft.com)

Users Group members get a 25% discount on any LingvoSoft software title at [www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/](http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/). Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the "Add Gift" field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button. You should then see the discount deducted from your order's total in the shopping cart. This offer is good until December 31, 2006.

That's it for this month. I hope to post more new announcements without discounts on my Web site before long; see [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). 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  
[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)



## Looking at Microsoft Vista

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., via APCUG

Many of the reviews that I have read on the early releases of Windows Vista have been done on "fast" hardware, often with 1 or 2 GB of RAM. Knowing that many users of Windows XP will probably upgrade to Vista with their current hardware, I installed a Beta 2.0 copy of Windows Vista on an older machine. This computer has an Intel 1.3 GHz CPU and had 256 MB of RDRAM. I upgraded the RAM to 512 MB, which is normal for many Windows XP users.

The computer also has an ATA 40 GB hard drive and a CD writer. However, when I went to install Vista, I found the installation disk was a DVD, so I had to upgrade to a DVD unit. I did manage to find a Sony DVD burner at a very reasonable price. So, a word of warning for those interested in upgrading to Vista when the final version is available, you may have to have a DVD drive to install it. This review is based on my hands-on experience with Vista.

### Installing Vista

I installed this Beta version to the hard drive as a new installation. It saved the previous version of Windows and user files in one folder. Since I had no applications or personal information on the drive, I was able to delete this folder after the installation was complete. I did note that the installation took more than 90 minutes to complete. I'm sure that this was partly related to the speed of this computer as well as the size of the operating system. Since this is a pre-release version, it probably contains debugging code that contributes to its overall size.

Once Vista was installed, it brought up a Control Center Window. This had icons for several items, one being hardware that wasn't installed and other to add a printer. There were also a Vista tutorial and an icon for new items in Vista. The first thing I tried was to see what hardware wasn't installed. The first item on the list was the Ethernet card, next the sound system, then a "Simple Controller" which I finally figured out was the modem and a SCSI controller. To simplify things I removed the modem and the SCSI card. Then I tried to install the Ethernet card. At that point, I started getting the User Account Control (UAC) windows that required that I approve every step that might change the make-up of the computer. Every time I tried to install a driver, I had several UAC windows to get through before I could get to the installation process. And this, in spite of the fact that I was running as the System Administrator.

Any of you that have set up Window XP Professional should be familiar with the Administrator and User Account system. On





my XP Pro system, I have the Administrator account and a User account, both of which are password protected. I rarely use the Administrator account, instead I work in the User account. You might ask why I do this. The reason is that without the Administrator account running it is more difficult for trojans, spyware, and other parasites to make changes to any of the system files on my computer.

That is assuming that they can get past the firewall in the first place. I have seen too many XP Pro systems where the user is always running in the Administrator mode, which has allowed invasions of the system by parasites. I have just cleaned out one system that was acting weirdly until I removed 295 parasites. Whenever I need to install software on my XP system, I simply use the "Run As" command and enter the Administrator password. That way I don't have to change from the User mode to the Administrator mode.



However, this has all changed in Vista with the User Account Control. Even if you are logged on as the System Administrator, it requests your permission for access to anything related to the system or devices. Just to review the list of hardware in the Device Manager requires that you get permission to do so by clicking in the Permissions Request window. When you try to install new software or drivers, you get a security window that requires your permission to let you continue. Then you get the UAC window that requires you verify that you know you are installing new software and that you think it is reliable! You even get a UAC window when you try to download and install Windows Updates!

I have learned that there is a good reason for this security. According to one report I have read it is possible for parasites to be downloaded to your computer along with a web page, and then to inactivate your anti-virus, firewall and anti-parasite software. This can all be done in the background if you are running in the Administrator mode. Then changes

## For Sale

Jack Fogarty tells me a friend of his has this cordless keyboard/mouse combo he doesn't need:

Logitech Desktop LX 501 cordless keyboard and mouse. Used only once. Includes receiver with USB connection, CD, and illustrated instructions. Configured for PC. Keyboard features: Navigation controls; Digital Media library; Enhanced F-keys; Media controls; Real-time communication; Calculator key; Suspend key; Tilt wheel (on mouse); Quick switch application button. \$35. Call Earl L. Fowler at 301-570-2666 or email [elf.kurgf@verizon.net](mailto:elf.kurgf@verizon.net).

can be made to your system software that can affect the operation of your computer. The UAC in Vista is designed to prevent this from happening.

Once I set up my User account, then I had fewer UAC windows show up. They occurred only when I wanted to install new software or drivers. The only thing I had to do then was to provide the Administrator password.

## Installing Drivers

Since I didn't have drivers for the Ethernet card, I had to search for one on the Internet using my XP computer. After some research, I was able to identify the make/model of the card. Then I found a driver on **DriverGuide.com**. I downloaded the zip file to my hard drive and burned it to a CD-RW. Then I transferred it to the hard drive on the Vista machine. Vista quickly extracted all the files for me. Then in the device driver, I clicked on "Update drivers" for the Ethernet card and told it to search the drive for a driver. Lo and behold, it did find and install the driver. Now, after some hard drive activity and approving the UAC to update the Network center, I was on the Internet.

The next thing I wanted was not my sound card driver. It was an anti-virus program. According to the Vista information site, only TrendMicro has an A-V program approved for Vista. However, I had noticed on the Avast Web site that they had a Vista-compatible version of their A-V software. So I went back to their web site and found that all versions of Avast are now Vista compatible. So I downloaded a free Home Edition and installed it. Again, I had the UAC windows to get through to get the installation under way. After it was installed, I went through the Avast registration and my A-V program was operational. So far, the Avast is running normally and is doing its usual updates in the background.

I have been using the Windows Firewall as I "assumed" it was a two-way firewall. I have since learned that it is only an incoming firewall. I plan on replacing it with ZoneAlarm, which will also block outgoing data when told to.

## Automatic Driver Install

After a re-boot of the computer, Vista popped up a window and asked if it could install my multimedia sound card. I clicked on OK and the next window had two choices, one of which was to search the Internet for a driver. At this point I still had no indication as to the manufacturer of the sound card, so I selected the Internet search. In just a few minutes it changed from searching to installing the software. Then I had a window saying it had installed the software for the Creative Labs sound card! Now that, in my mind is quite an improvement over previous Windows versions.

The one interesting aspect of the Creative installation is that Vista could not





install a driver for the game controller. As with most sound cards, there is an output for a game controller. For some reason, Vista was unable to install a driver for this output. It is now listed in the Device Manager as an unknown device. The sound card is listed correctly.

My next step was to set up a User account and shift out of the Administrator mode. That was accomplished quite easily through the Control Panel. So, once I was in User mode, I downloaded a copy of OpenOffice. When I started to install it, a UAC window popped up and I had to enter the Administrator password. Then the installation proceeded normally. Not really any different from the User mode in XP.

Vista has a Security software setup in the Control Panel that is similar to that in XP. It shows the status of the firewall, anti-virus, updates and a new item, Windows Defender. This latter software is an anti-parasite package. It has a default setting to scan your hard drive every day at 2:00 a.m. Since my computer is rarely turned on at that hour, I changed the setting to 5:00 p.m. It is more likely to be running at that time.

The last step was to install two networked printers. I clicked on the “Add printers” icon in the Control Center Window. That brought up the Printer Installation Wizard. I selected a networked printer and told it to find the printer. Several minutes later it told me there were no networked printers. So I backed up and selected browse for printer. That took me through the whole network tree, but I did find the printer. When I selected the printer and went to the next window, a bright yellow warning popped up to tell me that “printer drivers can install viruses! Are you sure this networked computer is trustworthy?” Well, since it is my main computer, I decided it was trustworthy and clicked on the OK button. Then I got the usual UAC window. After entering the password, the installation was completed and a test page printed. I had to go through the same routine with the second printer. But at least both of them are installed and working.

The Vista computer is now part of my local network and I can share files with it. In fact, part of this article was written on the Vista computer using the OpenOffice I downloaded. I had intended to finish the article on that computer, but the hard drive died. I can't fault Vista for this, the computer is old and it was the original drive. So, when the new drive arrives, I will have to reinstall Vista and all the drivers. Since I had activated this copy of Vista, it will be interesting to see what will happen when I have to activate the new installation.

Next month I hope to tell you of my experience with the Vista interface. So, hang in there, more information on Vista will be coming.

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor, and a member of the Sarasota PC Users Group in Florida ([www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)). He can be reached via email at [bwsail@yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com).*



## Is Your Computer a Zombie?

by S. Jack Lewtschuk, via APCUG

There are literally hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of “zombie computers” out there. Is your computer one of them?

Creating zombies out of computers used by you and me has become a major tool used by computer hackers, unscrupulous marketers, and other malicious evildoers. A computer becomes a zombie when it performs tasks as instructed by someone other than the computer owner. The instructions given to the zombie usually involve distributing information to other computers, which the zombie computer does without notifying its owner. In every spare moment, a zombie computer sends out data, most of which is spam that tries to get someone to purchase something.

### Zombie Computer Warning Signs

- ☞ The computer seems sluggish.
- ☞ The computer seems to be accessing the hard drive constantly.
- ☞ The mouse or keyboard becomes unresponsive.
- ☞ Excessive “bounce” notifications from people you never knowingly tried to email.

These warning signs may also be symptoms of other computer problems, but if you see any of them, you should investigate. For more information on zombie computers and spam, check out the FTC's Operation Spam Zombies website at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/spam/zombie/index.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/spam/zombie/index.htm).

### Keep Your Computer Zombie-Free

- ☞ Install a good **antivirus program** and make sure you update it regularly.
- ☞ Install a good **two-way firewall**. It will notify you when information is being sent from your computer, as well as preventing outside attacks. Unfortunately the Windows XP firewall is not adequate for this purpose—it is “one way” only.
- ☞ **Update your operating system** and other software regularly.
- ☞ Use an **anti-spyware program** to eliminate spyware on your system.
- ☞ **Check your antivirus and firewall** software occasionally to make sure they are running properly—often one of the first instructions given to a zombie computer is to disable the antivirus and firewall software.
- ☞ **Don't open unknown/unexpected email attachments!**
- ☞ **Use caution when downloading software**—buy from reputable



## Editor's Note

from Paul Van Bloem

Just a few quick observations from your Editor, and then you can get back to raking all those leaves.

### December Gift Card Drawing

Remember that we'll be having our semi-annual gift card drawing at the December meeting. Right now, there are five names in the hat. But if you act quickly, your name can be in there, too. Just pen an article, and submit it in time for the December issue, and you could have Christmas



that's \$50 merrier than otherwise!

The names currently in the drawing are:

- ↳ 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

If you don't feel inspired to write an article in the next few weeks, remember that we'll have another drawing at the June meeting. That drawing will include all members who presented or wrote an article in the first six months of 2007.

### December Meeting and Potluck Supper

Also remember that our annual Potluck Supper is coming up, at the December meeting. Sumi Kinoshita has agreed to coordinate this, as in years past. So think about what you can make (or buy) to bring. I expect Sumi will have a sign-up sheet to pass around at the November meeting, or you can call or email her (contact info is on the back of this newsletter).

We're also on the lookout for freebies to give away in December. Mike Kerwin said he has some items he picked up at CES, and we'll probably have some other items. If you or your company might like to supply some knickknacks, please contact Mike or one of the other CMUG officers.

### Free Software

You don't have to wait for December to get some freebies, tho. I came across a website that gives away commercial software for free! And it's even legal!

Visit [www.freeserifsoftware.com](http://www.freeserifsoftware.com), and you can download versions of Serif's page layout, photo editing, drawing, and other software.

Needless to say, these are not the latest versions. They tend to be two or three versions ago. The same website offers a deal where you can get the version before the current one (eg, version 9 if version 10 is the current one) for \$10.

I hope to write a Websites Worth Visiting article on this site, but you're all big boys and girls, so you can check it out without waiting for me.



companies, and be sure to read every screen as you download and install any software.

### Novice Corner: Safe Downloads

So, you've decided to download a program from the Internet. Are you sure that you really need it? OK, if you can't live without it, are all of your security programs active and updated? If so, click on "download" and cross your fingers.

An Internet download usually comes with a "prompt" from your browser—you'll be asked whether to "Run" (or "Open") or to "Save" the file. What should you do? Here's the difference:

- ↳ If you select "Run", the download file will go to your "Temporary Internet Files" folder. Then it will run or open automatically.
- ↳ If you select "Save", you have to choose where the file will be stored on your hard drive (creating a "Downloads" folder on your C drive might be a good idea at this point). The file will sit in this file until you decide to open it yourself.

So "Run" is convenient, but "Save" gives you more control and is generally safer. Once the file is saved, you can run a virus scan on it and examine the file. On the other hand, you shouldn't be downloading something of which you are unsure. Downloads from companies you know—for instance, **Microsoft**, **Adobe**, or **Apple**—are always OK.

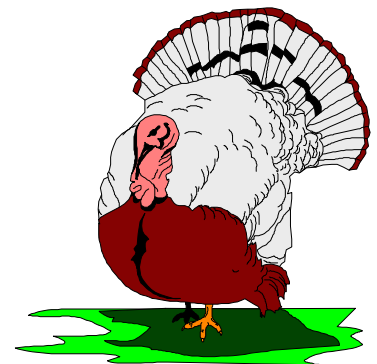
Even if you do choose "Run", you may still have the option to do some checking. **Internet Explorer** often lets you view digital signatures from the download prompt. After you click "Run", a digital certificate message will pop up. You can click on the name listed under "Publisher" for more information. Under "Digital Signature Information," it should say, "This digital signature is OK." Otherwise, the file is high risk.

Another option you might see is a checkbox labeled something like "Always ask before opening this type of file." Other browsers might use different phrasing such as "Always perform this action with this type of file." The phrasing can be tricky—the two examples mentioned here have opposite effects. So be careful with options that include "always", "never", or "automatically". Select the setting that will alert you with *every* download. Good luck!

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Mr. Lewtschuk is a member of the Monterey Bay Users' Group - Personal Computer ([www.mbug.org](http://www.mbug.org)). He can be reached via email at [blacklion@royal.net](mailto:blacklion@royal.net).*

# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
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Columbia, MD 21045



Meeting:  
**Wednesday, November 15, 7:30 pm**  
Topic: Art Silvergate on "Everything You Want to Know about Window Vista"

## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

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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.

Coming soon: [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)

