



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side....Tuesday, February 17

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side .Wednesday, February 18

University of Advancing Technologies
2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills .Thurs. February 19

Fountain Hills Community Center, N La Montana Drive,
(next to the Library, Fountain Hills)

**Presentation this month is:
Highlights from CES**

**Next Months Presentation:
Gene Barlow's Yearly Visit at
West Side Meeting Only**

**Check our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org
to verify subject matter and time changes .
ALL meetings!**



Phoenix PC Users Group Officers

President: Dean Botchuck
Vice President: David Yamamoto
Secretary: Chuck Lewis
Treasurer: Lo Hardman

Staff Members

Membership Coordinator: Chuck Lewis
Webmaster: Hank Pearson
Fountain Hills Coordinator: Tj
East Side Coordinator: Marion Smith
West Side Coordinator: Bill Aulepp
Public Relations: Tj
Newsletter Publisher: Steve Semon
Newsletter Editor: Bill Aulepp
Advertising Manager: David Yamamoto

Contact Information

Dean Botchuck: President@PhoenixPCUG.org
David Yamamoto: Vicepres@PhoenixPCUG.org
Chuck Lewis: Secretary@PhoenixPCUG.org
Lo Hardman: Treasurer@PhoenixPCUG.org
Steve Semon: Publisher@PhoenixPCUG.org
Bill Aulepp: Editor@PhoenixPCUG.org
Hank Pearson: Webmaster@PhoenixPCUG.org

**Steering Committee: Officers and
Members who are present at the 6:00
P.M. West Side meeting.**

Inside this Issue...

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Broadsides..... | 4 |
| Music Tagging with ID3..... | 5 |
| Our Members Ask..... | 7 |
| Security Precautions..... | 8 |
| Moving on to Vista..... | 9 |
| Build a 'Green' PC..... | 11 |
| Switch Browsers..... | 13 |
| Emailing to the Offline World..... | 15 |

JUSTIN FROM OUR MEMBERS

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dave and Bill have put together a collection of interesting highlights from CES in Vegas and items from the Internet for this month's presentation. This should be another informative session. The Fountain Hills meeting will be at the Community Center this month.

Gene Barlow will be at the March West Side General Meeting only. He will have the latest updates and some new stuff to present. I am hoping we have a nice turnout of members from East and Fountain Hills. Gene is one of the last vendors to make live presentations. We need your support.

The SW User Conference X3 will be from Friday Aug. 11 to Sunday Aug. 13 this year. Again, it will be held at the Town & Country Resort in San Diego. Pre-registration is \$50 until July 19 and hotel rate is \$99/night, single/double. The fee includes six meals, workshops (20 to choose from), vendor presentations, T-shirt and Welcome Bag. This year there is a digital photo contest. Entries must be in before July 7th. I will be happy to send you an email with the registration form and all the conference info.

president@phoenixpcug.org

David Yamamoto will chair the Merger Committee. Other members are John Curth, Brad Montroy and Bill Funk. They have scheduled a committee meeting on Feb. 11th.

Send me some Questions for the Members Ask articles.

Dean Botchuck

FROM OUR EDITOR

On February 11 the PPCUG merger committee met to formulate the steps required to complete a merger of the Phoenix PCUG and the ASCII. clubs. The committee headed by David Yamamoto included Brad Montroy, John Curth, and Bill Funk. They agreed that resolution in 10 areas would be required if both groups decide to merge.

Steve Semon attended as an observer. He has experienced a merger operation and he informed us on the problems he encountered both legal and practical. The committee's 10 items are:

1. Websites
2. Board Members
3. Meeting locations
4. Dates and number of meetings
5. Bank accounts and dues consolidation
6. Corporation Commission legalities
7. New articles of Incorporation
8. New Bylaws
9. Presentations at the new locations
10. New name

Bill Funk brought the discussion into *focus*. (Bill's expertise is photography and common sense) He pointed out the real discussion should be addressed to items 3, 4 and 10. Compared to the rest of the items if 3, 4 and 10 can't be agreed upon the rest are redundant.

Probably the first step might be a combined meeting of both groups to air the pros and cons of a merger.

Bill Aulepp

WHATS ON AND WHERE

CALENDAR

For room and time changes,
check your website: phoenixpcug.org .

February 2009

At all three general meetings, David Yamamoto will present a report of this year's CES in Las Vegas. If you didn't attend, this will be your chance to catch-up on what's new in consumer electronics.

Tuesday, February 17West 6:00 PM...CollegeAmerica

Wednesday, February 18 East 6:30 PMUAT

Thursday, February 19Fountain Hills6:30 PM

Note change from Library to the Community Center.

**Wed, January 25Photo SIGSubject:Shutter
followed by Digital Video SIG...CollegeAmerica ..6:00 PM**

March 2009

Gene Barlow's presentation will be at the March West Side General Meeting only. Presentations at the other meetings TBD.

**Tuesday, March 3 ...General Interest SIG6:00 PM
Fountain Hills Library**

Tuesday, March 17West 6:00 PM.....CollegeAmerica

Wednesday, March 18 East 6:30 PMUAT

Thursday, March 19Fountain Hills .6:30 PM....Library

**Wed, March 25 ..Photo SIG 6:00 PM.....followed by
Digital Video SIG.....CollegeAmerica**

BROADSIDES

Broadsides

Written by Ron Broadhurst, Space Coast PC Users Group, FL
www.scpcug.com
shiron (at) cfl.rr.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Dear friends,

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites, and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips, "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.



Ron Broadhurst

HOW TO HAVE WINDOWS REMIND YOU ABOUT PENDING UPDATES

- Click Remind Me Later in the Automatic Updates dialog box before you download or install the update.
- In the Reminder dialog box, you can specify the amount of time Windows should wait before reminding you.
- If the reminder is for downloading, Windows reminds you only when you are connected to the Internet.

If the reminder is for installing, Windows reminds you according to the schedule that you specify.

AND HOW TO DOWNLOAD AVAILABLE UPDATES

If you configured automatic updating to notify you before downloading any updates, an icon is displayed in the notification area each time new updates are found.

- Double-click the icon in the notification area.
- Do either of the following steps:

If you want Windows to download an update, make sure that the check box beside it is selected.

-or-

If you do not want Windows to download an update, click to clear the check box beside it. Your selected updates are downloaded in the background; this behavior allows you to continue working uninterrupted. Downloading does not interfere with or slow down other network activity, such as Internet browsing.

When downloading is finished, the icon is displayed in the notification area to notify you that updates are ready to be installed.

CUSTOMIZE THE START MENU

The Start menu gets more real estate in XP than in previous versions, and it's more customizable. To make the Start menu display only the applications you want, rather than the default determined by Microsoft:

- Right-click in an empty section of the Start menu's left column.
- Select Properties > Start Menu > Customize. Here you'll find a list of your most fre-

(Continued on page 15)

MUSIC TAGGING WITH ID3

Music Tagging with ID3

by Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Computer Users Group, KY www.bgamug.org
ml.moore (at) insightbb.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

MP3 is a compressed music format that can be used to fit a track of music that would normally occupy hundreds of megabytes on a Compact Disc into four or five megabytes. While some of the data is lost in this compression, it is data that cannot normally be heard in the rendering of the music file. In compressing music files this way, we can fit more music onto our music appliances, such as iPods and other MP3 players.

While the process of compressing music files is interesting for techies, it is not something we normally have to concern ourselves with, because often the music files are already in MP3 format when we acquire them. Double-click on the MP3 file and PRESTO, the song plays.

What is interesting and really required of digital music collectors is that we must keep our music organized. Since there are obviously many ways in which one can name a file of music, this is really not a very good way to keep a library organized, unless you have complete control over how a song is named.

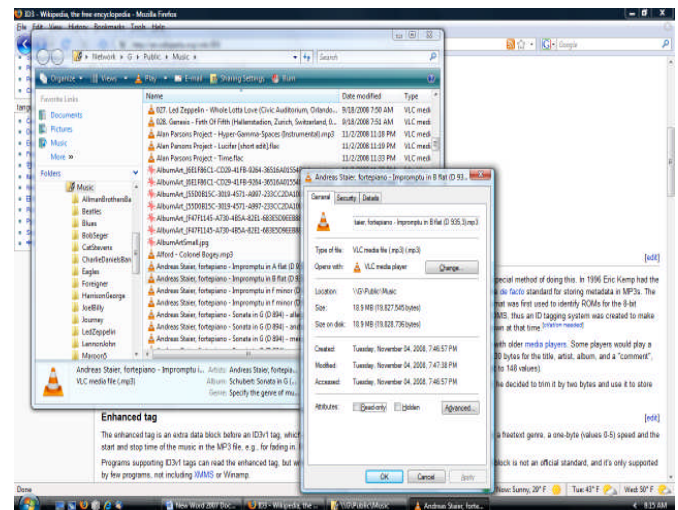
Think of a given song. There are some obvious metrics on which the song could be organized. For starters, we have the name of the piece, the recording artist and label, the name of the band or orchestra, the genre of music, and so forth. There are dozens of less obvious metrics, such as the length of the song, when it was re-

corded – even who borrowed it from you and when!

These little pieces of information about a given track are known as “meta-data” or “meta-information.” This set of information is literally, data about data, because the music file itself is a kind of digital data.

The music industry has adopted a standard, known as ID3 that provides for meta-information to be included with an MP3 file. You might think of ID3 as the *wrapper* that an MP3 file comes surrounded in.

To view and edit this information, Windows supports ID3 by allowing you to right-click on an MP3 file and see & change all of the meta-information. You can also see a limited set of the metadata about a song by simply hovering your mouse over a music file. Here I have right-clicked on a piano piece called *Impromptu in B Flat*, written by Franz Schubert. Remember when you right-click to get a context menu, it's a *single* right-click, not a double click.



That gives me the size in Megabytes of the file, its name and when it was stored. If I click on the Details tab, I get all

(Continued on page 6)

MUSIC TAGGING WITH ID3

(Continued from page 5)

of the rest of the meta-data, including the artist and composer:

There are various versions of ID3 that have little relationship to each other. For more detailed information about ID3, read this article in Wikipedia:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ID3>.

The good news is that most modern MP3 players, when encountering ID3, simply ignore it when playing back the music. So we have music data inside of an MP3 file that we hear, and ID3 data that we can see when we right-click on the file.

So, here we have a way in which you can see the meta-data about one particular song. But suppose I wanted to organize and manipulate a large number of songs – even to the extent of pulling this information out of the meta-data fields that we see and using it to construct a meaningful file name? After all, file names are the basis for how Windows stores files, so it would make sense that we might want our music files named in a very particular way. One of the standards I use is to organize music in folders that are named corresponding to the artist that recorded the song.

It turns out that there are many ID3 capturing and editing utility programs out on the internet (many of which actually cost money), and I'm going to mention just one of them: TagScanner.

In tech circles, the ID3 meta-data information that is imbedded at the end of a music file is known commonly as a "tag."

Who would enjoy sitting at their computer typing in album and artist information for each track? With the free TagScanner, you don't have to. This efficient and powerful tag editor lets you edit and collect meta-data automatically as well as by hand, both for individual files and file batches.

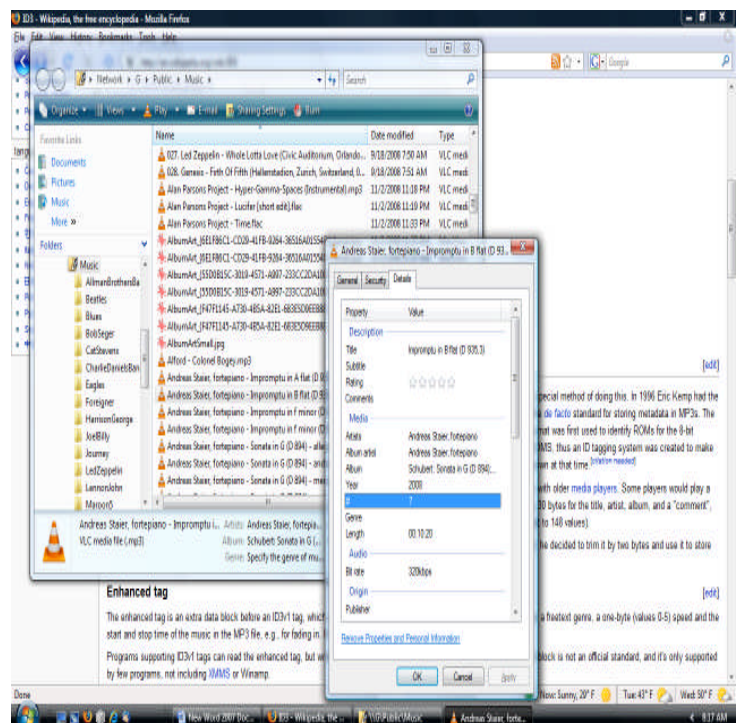
The automatic tagging feature is most impressive. Although it can hook up to online databases such as FreeDB, Gracenote, and Amazon like many other auto-tagging applications, it can also generate tags from file and folder names--something many others can't. It works in the opposite direction, too, generating filenames from tags. This is very important, because many files come to us virtually unusable from a sorting point of view, because their file names begin with, say, a catalog number that means nothing to our sorting scheme.

TagScanner has an elegant and orderly interface, and lets you preview filenames before applying changes. The only catch is that you'll need to spend some time learning the program's file- and tag-naming language. However, if you have thousands of music tracks crying out for organization, that's a small price to pay.

Get TagScanner (free) at:

<http://www.xdlab.ru/en/>

The main TagScanner window:



MEMBERS ASK

Question: Water in Cell Phone

Answer: If a Cell Phone or any Electronic Device becomes submerged or wet, quick action may make a big difference in its survival. The wrong kind of treatment may insure its demise. Never use a vacuum cleaner or air compressor.

1. Pull the battery ASAP!! Remove the power ASAP!! This should be done within seconds of its retrieval. Delay may cause short circuiting of parts that are still working. This is a most important step.

2. If the device has a memory card, remove it.

3. ASAP generously pour rubbing alcohol over the device or even better, submerge it in a bowl of alcohol until bubbling stops. Gentle agitation may help displace internal water. Alcohol absorbs and displaces the water and dries much faster.

4. Soak for a few seconds, try to get as much water absorbed or displaced as possible. Drain and shake it to get as much of the alcohol out as possible.

5. Continue to shake until sure it is as dry as possible. LCD screens are often hard to dry.

6. Let air dry for several hours. Make sure it is really dry.

7. Replace the battery and test. Will this work every time? No, but you have done your best with the equipment available.

8. If the device has a motor or moving parts, some or all of the lubrication may have been washed away. Not all these surfaces are accessible. With some care, lubrication may be possible. Be careful not to over lubricate and clean off excess oil.

Never, Never, Never ever use 3 in 1 oil on anything! Throw it away! Some of the light

synthetic and silicone lubricants are great, just not thick ones. Use the same type of light grease where necessary. One of my favorite sources for small amounts of oil is derived from WD-40. Spray some WD-40 into a cap from a plastic bottle. Allow plenty of time for the propellant to evaporate from the oil. Use a toothpick to apply the grease and oil.

When I was young, we used carbon tetrachloride from the shop fire extinguishers (also was used in dry cleaning shops) and it worked really great. That, of course, is not legal now so, alcohol is a good substitute.

**MEMBERS ASK
is a Monthly Feature.
It's your chance to
Participate in your
Newsletter.**

**So email your questions to
Dean at:**

president@phoenixpcug.org

Remember alcohol flames easily so keep away from fire or sparks. Do not smoke while cleaning.

I know, I know, do not drop your cell phone into the bath tub!

Dean Botchuck

SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Why security precautions are necessary

By Bob de Violini, a member of the Channel Islands PCUG, California
www.cipcug.org
rjddev (at) gmail.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

First off for the holidays, there's a story that illustrates just why you should always enable encryption on your wireless router (for those who use one) AND why you should be leery of any public computer for Web sites you need a password to access. A college student in Kentucky has been charged with identity theft, among other crimes, for planting malware on computers in his school's library. The malware was a keystroke logger that captured usernames and passwords for any pages fellow students logged into. He then used this information to access their e-mail accounts and send out e-mails attempting to extort these same fellow students. He also used an unsecured wireless router to access these accounts, making it look as if someone else were actually sending the e-mails. The attempted extortion took the form of a threat to divulge personal information the thief had stolen from the compromised e-mail accounts. That leads me to our next item, WPA encryption.

As of the beginning of November, a pair of computer security researchers in Europe disclosed a technique they'd developed to partially hack WPA encryption used by a great number of wireless routers today. Before anyone thinks the sky is falling, rest assured it isn't. Their hack involves only the traffic being sent from the router to a computer and only a small number of data packets can be cracked before the router resets its encryption. However, it is enough to be able to send just enough rogue data to a computer to compromise it with any number of known vulnerabilities. Specifically, it involves the TKIP protocol that WPA and WPA2 are allowed to use. The specifics of just how this trick is accomplished have been made available to hackers in many areas of the Internet, so it's just a matter of

time before it begins spreading. TKIP and AES encryption are selectable by the user in many wireless router configurations, and some have WPA with TKIP selected by default. I strongly recommend you check your wireless router's encryption configuration, and if it's set to use WPA with TKIP, you switch to WPA2 with AES if at all possible. This is especially important if you use a wireless router to run a network for a business. I have my Linksys wireless router set to use WPA2 with AES encryption. AES is significantly harder to crack than the older TKIP protocol. One final note on this, however. For AES encryption to work, both the router and the network adapter in the computer must be able to use it. Some older hardware may not support AES encryption, so an upgrade may be needed. If you'd like some more information, please drop me a line at the email address at the top of this article, and I'll gladly send you a link or two.

Scare of the month department

Even though Halloween has already passed, we have the Scare of the Month Department chiming in with some news. There is a new phishing e-mail making the rounds disguised as a warning from the U.S. Federal Reserve. The message bears the usual dire warning of a scam and contains links for readers to follow to get more information. However, there are a few clues that give the message away as a hoax, the biggest one being poor grammar. The links in the e-mail lead unsuspecting readers to a fake site that will redirect them to a search page for porn, which will download a PDF file with malware to their computer. The malware comes in various forms, including one that attempts to make your computer a member of a botnet. A brief notice can be had here, courtesy of US-CERT: <http://tinyurl.com/66lzv9>. The link does go to the US-CERT site; I just used TinyURL to shorten the URL's length.

Patches Galore Department

As I mentioned above, there have been some exploits on the loose for a bit for Adobe Acrobat, and the full program and the reader have been updated as a result. The latest versions are 8.1.3 and 9.0. Adobe has also updated its Flash player, standard fare in most browser

(Continued on page 11)

SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a gift subscription to the Phoenix PC Users Group to be used as a door prize, raffle, etc., for each five subscriptions received from our group. Subscriptions can be applied for with the subscription coupon below or by phone as long as you use our group's unique source code number (8305) when beginning the subscription.

For each paid subscription using the source code 8305, our user group will be credited one credit. Results are calculated each quarter, and credits will accumulate until the group reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time they will contact the PPCUG.

In the event our group does not reach the five paid subscription mark by the end of the quarter, credits will be carried over into the following quarter until the amount reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time a free subscription will be issued.



USER GROUP PROGRAM 8305

Smart Computing.com/groups Order on line

1 Year.....\$29
 2Years.....\$48
 3Years.....\$64

Name (Please Print) _____
 Company _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

Payment Options (Check One)

Payment Enclosed Bill Me
 Discover American Express Visa Master Card

Card Account Number _____
 Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Mail To: Smart Computing PO Box 86380 Lincoln, NE 68501-9807 OR
 Call To Order 800 733-3809 402 479-2136 Or Fax 402 479-2183
 PLEASE ASK THEY CREDIT PHOENIX USER GROUP SC8305C PU513

MOVING ON TO VISTA

Moving on to Vista – Part 11
by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC
User Group, Washington
www.tapcug.org
ncstahfest(at)msn.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

One of Vista's disk management systems, that is new to me, is a dynamic disk and the ability to extend a volume. Suppose you have a volume or folder on your hard drive called Pictures for your photographs. If you run out of space on your hard drive, but you have space available on another hard drive installed on your PC, you can extend your Picture volume onto that drive to make it bigger. There are two limitations to this process. First, you cannot reverse the process. Second, once created you cannot remove the space you've used on the second disk to reduce the size of the volume. The only way you can do this is to create a new volume on one of your drives, copy all of the contents of the spanned volume to it and then delete the spanned volume. The other limitation is you cannot extend the Windows System volume.

I'm not really sure how I would use this feature. My inclination is to create new volumes and not try to span a volume across two hard drives. Perhaps when working with video files, which can consume enormous amounts of space, this might be a useful feature.

How often do you start an operation on your computer which opens a dialog box on the desktop that requires you to click on "OK"? So you move your mouse to put the pointer on the "OK" box and click on it. You probably do this many times in a day. Did you know that there is a setting to automatically move your mouse pointer to the OK button so that all you have to do is

click on it? Here's how you can configure Windows Vista to do this.

First click on the "Start" button and then the "Control Panel". Under the "Hardware and Sound" entry in the "Control Panel" box, click on "Mouse". The "Mouse Properties" box will open. Click on "Pointer Options". Locate "Snap To" and click to create a check mark to activate "Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialog box".

While you're looking at the "Pointer Options" box, consider the next option line, "Display pointer trails". If you occasionally have trouble locating the mouse pointer on the desktop, consider this option. Experiment with the length of the pointer trail setting. If you don't like it, turn it off.

On a slightly different topic, let's talk about shortcuts. Many application programs create a shortcut on your desktop when you install the program. They're a convenient way to start a program without have to go to the Start menu. There are other ways to use short-cuts too. Suppose you have a spreadsheet or genealogy file that you frequently update. Locate the file with Windows Explorer, right-click on the file name, scroll down the pop-up menu to where it says "Create Shortcut" and click on it. Now, before you close the Windows Explorer window, locate the new shortcut and drag it to your desktop. Because Windows (XP as well as Vista) associates application programs with certain type of files (i.e. Windows Excel with spreadsheets), when you click on the file shortcut the application will start and open the file.

But suppose you can't see your desktop icons and short-cuts because they're hidden by something else? Maybe your Internet browser or e-mail program is running and completely cover your desktop. Let's go back and look at the shortcut on your desktop. Right-click on it. In the windows
(Continued on page 11)

SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

MOVING ON TO VISTA

(Continued from page 8)

installations, to version 10.0.12.36 to patch publicly reported vulnerabilities last month as well. Not to be outdone, Mozilla has also issued a patch for its Firefox browser and Thunderbird e-mail client. These patches address several bugs that have been brought to light in the past month to month and a half. The latest iterations of Firefox are 2.0.0.18 and 3.0.0.4. The latest version of Thunderbird is 2.0.0.18. I have read reports of some problems with version 3.0.0.4 and 2.0.0.18 of Firefox, with most of the reports being about version 3.0.0.4. The solution for those having problems after upgrading to 3.0.0.4 has been to go back to 3.0.0.3. I have updated my version to 2.0.0.18 and have had no problems. Some patches take longer than others to develop and test, however. One of the patches issued by Microsoft on November's Patch Tuesday took them seven years to develop and test. The bug it patched was first reported by a security researcher in March 2001. Microsoft claims that it tried patching it when it was first reported but wound up killing off most networking applications with the patches when they underwent testing. However, they didn't give up and finally found a way to patch the vulnerability earlier this year.

While we're speaking of Microsoft, it has announced plans to abandon its One Care concept of computer protection service and develop free anti malware applications for release in 2009. The new concept is code named "Morro." As usual, folks are coming down on both sides of pro and con when it comes to this development. Microsoft hasn't given a firm release date for the new software, but has said that One Care will come to an end on June 30. Well, that's all for now. Here's wishing everyone a joyous Holiday season and a Happy New Year! Always practice safe computing by keeping your applications and your anti-malware applications fully up to date. Make sure to run your anti-malware scanner(s) once a week, even if they don't flag anything in between scans.

(Continued from page 10)

that opens, notice the four tabs at the top. Click on the tab marked "Shortcut". In the middle of the Shortcut menu you'll find something marked "Shortcut key". You'll probably see "None" entered in the box next to it. Click on the box and press and hold down your Ctrl key. In the box you'll now see "Ctrl + Alt + ". While still holding down the Ctrl key, press the the key you want to use to access the shortcut. Now click on the Apply button and then the OK button. Your shortcut key is now set. Just press the three key combination to instantly access your spreadsheet or genealogy file.

Before we leave the topic of Shortcuts I'll just mention that when you open a Shortcut's properties window, the first tab is marked "General". If you click on "General", one of the first entries is "Type of File" and "Open with". If you click on the adjacent "Change" button, you'll see a list of possible application programs to access the file. You can select from this list or click on "Browse" to locate another program.

I'm hearing more rumors about Windows 7 but, at this point, they are still rumors. One thing seems certain, Windows 7 will have more in common with Windows Vista than Windows XP. Whatever you learn about Windows Vista should help you when you upgrade to the next version of Windows.

HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP.
BRING A GUEST
TO THE NEXT MEETING.

BUILD A 'GREEN' PC ON A BUDGET

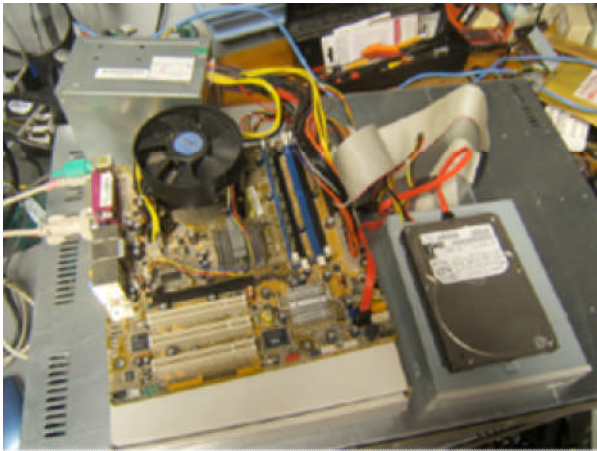
(Build a 'Green' PC on a Budget

By Rob Limbaugh, President, Danbury Area
Computer Society, CT

www.dacs.org

Relimbaugh (at) dacs.org

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).



We're constantly bombarded by the subject of energy conservation—'green' this and 'green' that. I think that much of our problem is our 'disposable society'. On top of that it seems that most people tend to be 'green' only if it fits into their budget and lifestyle. It is a little difficult to rationalize spending \$25,000 on a solar array for a house that will take a decade to 'pay for itself'.

But, if you happen to be looking for another computer and you're willing to spend some spare time and effort, you can rescue good parts from a premature demise and save money at the same time. How? Read on!

Timing Is Everything

Around here we have 'transfer stations' to which local residents take their refuse and recyclables if they don't have curbside pickup or another service. The transfer sta-

tion is somewhat of a presorting point before everything goes to a larger dump site.

What amazes me is that people seem to be willing to pay a few bucks to throw away things that could be recycled or disposed of for no cost—just a bit more effort. No matter. That works out well for me—I can shop!

I need more computer equipment like I need another hole in my head. What I always seem to lack are good motherboards to match up with the spare DVD drive here and spare hard drive there. On a recent trip to the dump I hit pay dirt! Someone had dropped off a bunch of computer equipment and I got there early enough in the day to have relatively fresh dibs!

Weeding Out Junk

Knowing that 'garbage' tends to be at dumps, I look for specific traits when considering a rescue of any would-be junk. Last thing I want to do is throw it away when I get home and you can't exactly test things at a transfer station. This is a good exercise in knowing your hardware as you can just take home the good stuff and leave everything else there. As luck would have it, I found a gutted case with a motherboard stripped of everything but the CPU and heat sink. Even the BIOS battery was gone! They did leave the power supply, though.

Back to the Bench

So far my out-of-pocket expense is \$0.00 and I'd like to keep it that way! I take the guts home and blow them out with an air-compressor. The minimum needed to successfully power on a motherboard are a power supply, motherboard, CPU, fan, and memory. Unfortunately I didn't have any memory on hand for this motherboard, so now it's time to do some leg work and see if I should consider spending the money when I don't even know if the board works.

(Continued on page 13)

BUILD A 'GREEN' PC ON A BUDGET

(Continued from page 12)

The motherboard, in this case, can be identified by a silkscreen of "PTGD1-LA" between the PCI slots. This cross-references to a board used in HP Pavilion Ax00 systems. This gives me access to motherboard details so I know what the connecting pins are, memory requirements, and other details necessary to do troubleshooting. Yippee, memory for this board is on sale right now—1GB for \$27!

Good, Bad, or Ugly?

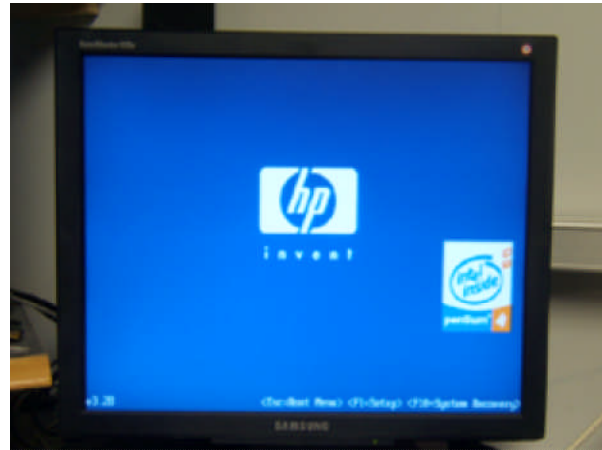
In this situation I presume the components are good until proven faulty. Having all the dust blown off, I sniff around the motherboard. That's right... using my nose, I sniff around the motherboard. The power supply, too. Fried components have a burnt smell. All smells good.

Powering on a working system with the memory removed should get yield 'memory error' beep codes from the motherboard. I power everything on and get beep codes indicating bad memory. During this time I listen for fan noise out of the power supply and the CPU fan. Nothing that sounds like skateboard wheels on pavement. Things are looking good!

Many motherboards take CR2023 batteries for memory, including this one. I picked up a two-pack along with a 1GB stick of PC-3200 memory. So far I'm out about \$30 and still don't know if this will fire up completely—but odds are in my favor. Besides, if I needed PC-3200 and PC batteries today, I'd need them in the future for another find later.

Hot Dog!

With the memory seated and a battery added, I fired up the machine and the screen came up! Woo-Hoo! Looking really good now! And it's a P4!



I gathered up a spare SATA hard drive and DVD drive and connected them to the system. BIOS reported the devices. Turns out this is an Intel P4 3.0GHz CPU with Hyper-threading.



Wrapping It Up

Sure this isn't a screaming-fast brand new machine, but it has much potential and is still quite useful. Someday, the parts will wind up being recycled through the transfer station for good—but not today. For now, it has a new life. This board has integrated video, audio, and four SATA ports. It has IDE, USB, PCI Express, and legacy connections. It is also very quiet. This is not bad find at all! I will probably use this as the start of my network storage system.

Now if only I could get my hands on some DVD-RW drives that don't work...

SWITCH INTERNET BROWSERS

How To Switch Internet Browsers

Written by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

www.compukiss.com

[sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their

browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the pro-

(Continued on page 15)

SWITCH INTERNET BROWSERS

BROADSIDES

(Continued from page 14)

gram will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

(Continued from page 4)

quently used programs. (XP keeps track of what you use and what you don't, then updates this list dynamically).

Don't want your boss to know that Pinball, Solitaire and Quake all make your list?

Go to the General tab, click Clear List, and set the counter to zero.

HOW TO PERFORM DISK ERROR CHECKING IN WINDOWS XP

This describes how to check the integrity of the hard disk drive in Windows XP. After you install Windows XP, the Scandisk command is not available.

- Double-click My Computer and then right-click the hard disk drive that you want to check.
- Click Properties and then click Tools.
- Under Error-checking click Check Now.
- Click Start.

ADD FAMILIAR ICONS BACK TO YOUR DESKTOP

It's the case of the missing icons. Many of you may be wondering where all the icons from your desktop are in Windows XP? You can place at least My Computer, My Network Places and My Documents on the desktop.

- Right-click on the desktop and then click Properties.
- Click the Desktop tab and then click on Customize Desktop.

Put a check mark in the box next to My Document, My Computer, My Network Places or Internet Explorer, to add those familiar icons to your desktop.

EMAIL TO THE OFFLINE WORLD

Magic Word Brings Email to the Offline World

A review by Gabe Goldberg, Computers and Publishing, Inc.

Tiplet (at) gabegold.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

If you've ever wondered how to bring email to the techno-phobe in your life, the answer isn't Abracadabra, it's Presto.

If you're reading this online, you own or have access to a computer. But you likely have friends or relatives -- perhaps elderly, budget-restricted, technophobic -- who don't. So they're not in close touch and can't share online family or community activities.

Presto <<http://www.presto.com>> is a combination color inkjet printer and paid Web-based service which allows people without computers to receive email, including attachments.

Setting it up is simple: after purchasing the device, someone with just a bit of tech savvy creates the account, picks an email address (such as gabeg99@presto.com), and lists people allowed to send email to the address. At specified times of day, the printer dials a toll-free telephone number, downloads accumulated email, and prints it.

With only two controls -- Volume and Stop -- it's easy to operate. It plugs directly into a telephone jack and doesn't need a separate phone line or jack or even a splitter, since an existing telephone or accessory (answering machine or Caller ID device) can plug into it, daisy-chain style.

Presto is ideal for letting seniors receive email from children, grandchildren,

friends, former colleagues, military buddies, etc. And it's useful when businesses request customer email addresses to conduct or simplify transactions. It handles pictures and many attachment formats nicely, printing them as if it was a FAX machine. So it allows sharing any online or computer content as PDF files such as maps and directions, travel itineraries, Web pages, spreadsheets with financial or family contact information.

Simple steps authorize new people to send email, and when ink runs low, the printer is smart enough to either alert the person who set up the account or automatically order new cartridges.

After failing for a dozen years to excite my in-laws about email -- they steadfastly resisted being online -- my retired Navy father-in-law fell in love with a Presto I loaned him, discovering that it let him hear from his old Navy buddies around the world. And receiving color pictures of the grandchildren sealed the deal.

The printer costs \$150 or less (always comparison shop online!) and the service costs \$12.50/month with yearly subscription. The only thing missing is the printer downloading paper and ink through the phone line -- but that would need real magic!

This article first appeared on the Tippet Web site, <www.tippet.com> and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to Tippet and the author. It should be unchanged and this paragraph must be included. Please e-mail the author at tippet@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense. Tippet's free newsletter provides weekly computer tips.

NEWSLETTER POLICIES

This newsletter is a publication of the Phoenix PC Users Group, Inc. All rights reserved except as specifically permitted.

Articles, programs, reviews, artwork, photographs and any advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy, or suitability to a specific task or computer. Any comments, or claims, made within this publication are solely the responsibility of the author and do not express the views of any other group member, the Board of Directors, nor the Phoenix PC Users Group, Inc. We reserve the right to refuse any advertising for any reason.

The Phoenix PC Users Group News, a newsletter, is published monthly, with article submission deadlines occurring the 29th of each month. This publication is mailed with the intention of reaching members before the monthly meeting of issue date. The Group is not responsible for lost or destroyed newsletters, other than replacing an issue lost in the mail. Notify the group Membership Coordinator at least four weeks in advance of change of address when moving.

Copyright 2008 by the Phoenix PC Users Group, Inc. This publication may not be photocopied, reproduced in whole or in part, by any means,

without specific written consent of the Phoenix PC Users Group, Inc.

Other computer user groups currently exchanging newsletters with the Phoenix PC Users Group, Inc. are granted permission to copy, redistribute, and use this publication as needed, providing that articles, authors and this publication are credited. If the author of an article is not a member of PPCUG the author should be contacted for permission.

Submissions to the "News" should be in MS Word, RTF or unformatted text.

Articles, photos, screen shots may be e-mailed over the Internet directly to the editor at:

editor@PhoenixPCUG.org

Please include the author's name, address, phone number and e-mail address on the first lines of the article.

All materials submitted will be considered for inclusion in the "News", but the Editor reserves the right to edit as necessary, to maintain standards of literacy, grammar, and length requirements. No materials will be returned unless arrangements are made made in advance.

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN GET YOU'RE YOUR NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY EACH MONTH ?

Or did you expect to get a copy electronically and still received a paper copy?

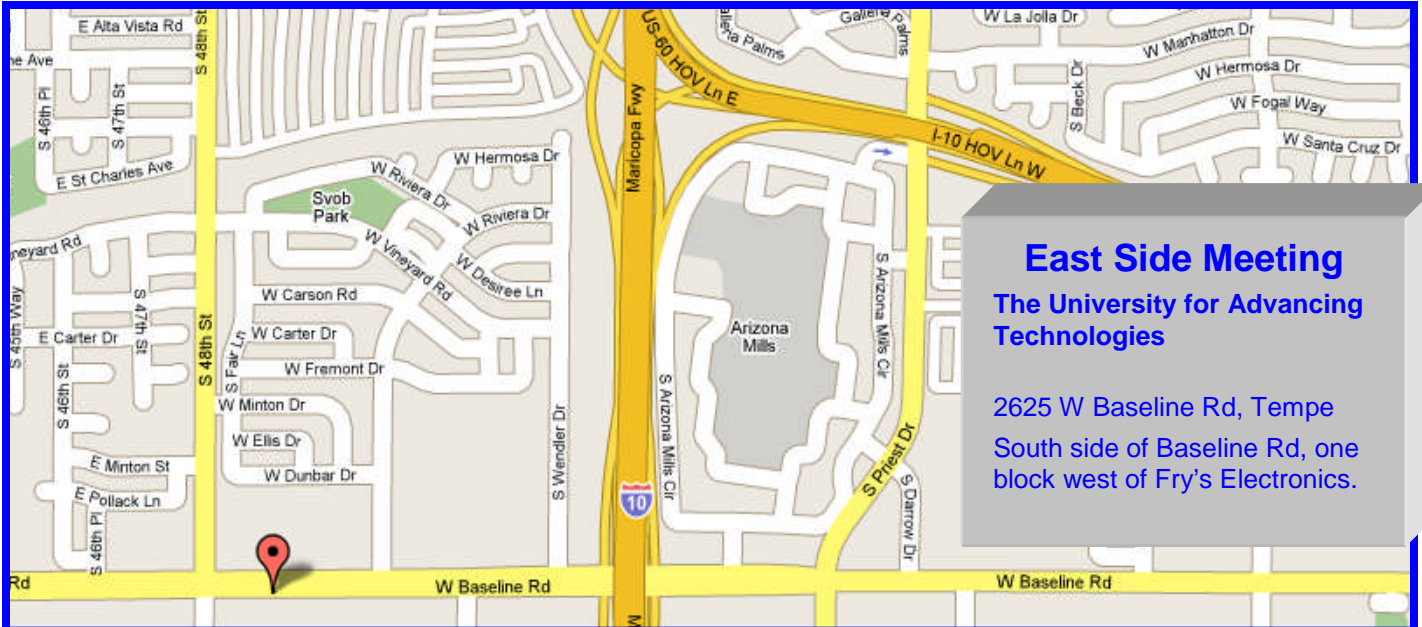
Just send an email — members@phoenixpcug.org — or check the box on your membership application. You will get a notice each month when the newsletter is available.

MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS !

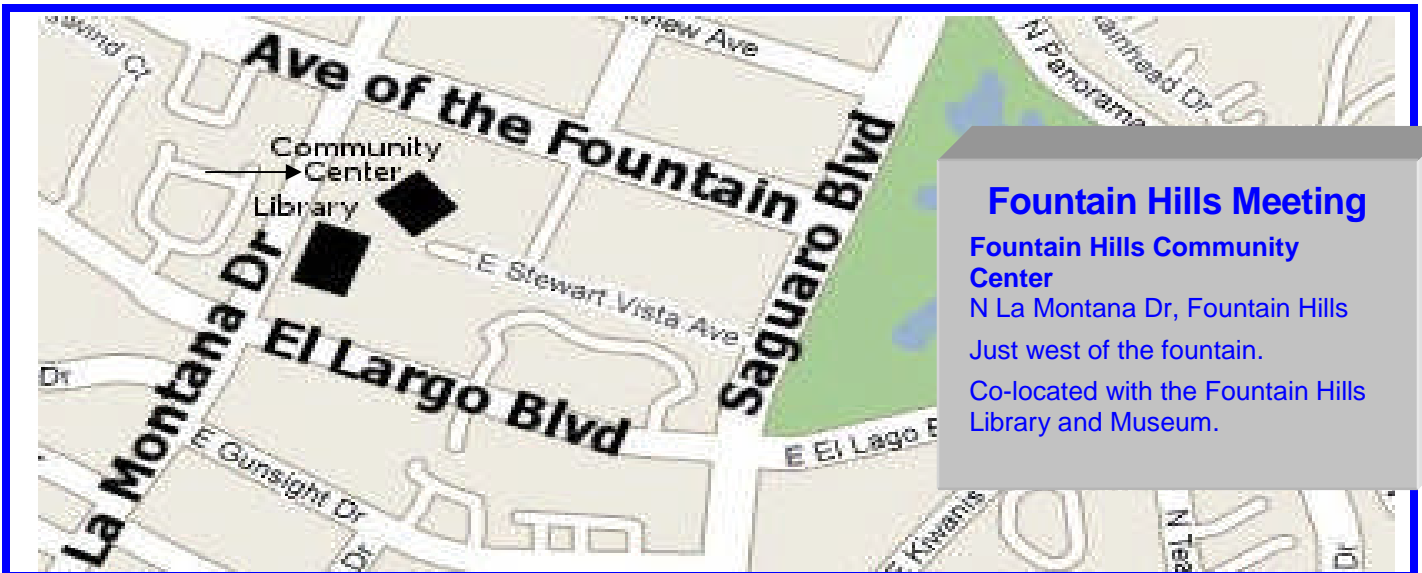
HOW TO GET THERE



West Side Meeting
College America Room 2
 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy
 Phoenix
 Turn right (east) on McLellan Blvd.
 Immediately turn right (south) into parking lot..



East Side Meeting
The University for Advancing Technologies
 2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
 South side of Baseline Rd, one block west of Fry's Electronics.



Fountain Hills Meeting
Fountain Hills Community Center
 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills
 Just west of the fountain.
 Co-located with the Fountain Hills Library and Museum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE

The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Users Group is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.

DUES
\$36 FOR YEAR.
JAN 1, THROUGH DEC 31, 2009

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Please Print) Initial: Last:

Address:

City, State: Zip Code:

Home Phone: Work Phone: Ext:

Please note: We DO-NOT share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site

Release my address to vendors ? Yes No Note: Phone numbers will not be listed.

E-mail address: Signature Date

- May the club share your e-mail address with other members only? Yes No
With club approved vendors? Yes No
Please do not share my e-mail address
Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one Yes No

Mail this completed form with payment to:

Phoenix PC Users Group
5555 N. 7th Street, Suite 5
PMB101
Phoenix, AZ 85014



*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

February 2009

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group
"Users helping users to understand computers"

STAMP

PHOENIX PC USERS GROUP
5555 N 7TH ST STE 5 PMB 101
PHOENIX AZ 85014-2575