Phoenix PC Users Group

NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side……………..…Tue, Mar 15

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side………………Wed, Mar 16

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

Fountain Hills………..Thu, Mar 17

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,
Fountain Hills

Presentation this month:
This month something for everyone
How Not to Troubleshoot Your PC
Followed by several short demos
How do I find a product on the Web
Using Windows Help
Using Skype
The new Smart Pads

For date and time changes, check our
website: phoenixpcug.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hello everybody, happy Easter. Once again, Gene Barlow did an excellent presentation for us on Acronis True Image for managing and backing up hard drives. In the coming months, we plan to cover several of his topics in detail, such as the Sandbox concept for protecting a computer from malware such as "drive-by" viruses from websites. Until we do, please use Site Advisor from McAfee, a free download that helps users from clicking on bad websites.

This month we will feature several segments. Lo will explain How Not to Troubleshoot Your PC.

This presentation will be followed by several short segments:

How do I find a product on the Web
Using Windows Help
Using Skype
The new Smart Pads

Lo, our treasurer, and Bill, our publisher, would like all who have been paying their dues on the old schedule to pay their 2011 dues now so we can get an accurate list of all our active Members.

A new membership drive is a big topic and one idea is to contact the Scottsdale computer & electronics swap meet. Plans so far include having a table & literature to hand out. Please contact Allen Hunt, our VP for details. It is normally on the 3rd Sunday of each month. If you have thoughts on this idea or any other ideas p0lease let us know.

David

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Recent television advertisements have been focused on ever more powerful electronic devices. "I just bought the third generation unit," one actor laments as he sees a billboard advertising the new fourth generation unit. In another commercial, "I think that I will just wait for a few months for the new one." And so on. Many would say that this escalation in product development is the inevitable fulfillment of Moore's Law, (Roughly stated: "Computer processing speed, memory capacity, and sensor capability doubles about every two years."). Indeed, there have been published projections that worldwide computer capability will surpass the sum total of the brain capability of the entire human race in the 22nd century!

"Well, not so fast", as one well-watched football prognosticator had a penchant for saying. It seems that there are still niche markets for some electronic devices that are considered to be passé. For instance, vinyl records are being made again to satisfy a group of enthusiasts who claim that the tonal purity of music can not be matched by digital devices. Even photographic film has almost disappeared from general use. Yet commercial photographers are still taking pictures with film. But now they use twin cameras. One digital camera for speedy review of a photo shot, and a second camera with slide film for subtleties of color hue and saturation. It is the slide film that is used for transfer to glossy magazines, or is blown up to unbelievable sizes. (The largest wall in the Great Hall of New York's Grand Central Station, over 2 hundred feet long, once featured a mural of a Bengal Tiger that was produced from a single 35mm. slide.) Try that with your 12 megapixels!

In all of this stampede to mass produce devices with more capabilities than the ordinary consumer will ever use, it would be nice if somebody would invent a high quality hearing aid that actually worked and did not require a mortgage loan to buy!

Michael

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our website: phoenixpcug.org

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

Something for everyone
How Not to Troubleshoot Your PC
Followed by several short demos
How do I find a product on the Web
Using Windows Help
Using Skype
The new Smart Pads

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)
   - Tuesday, March 15, 2011
   - 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
   - 6:30 PM - Q and A
   -

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 16)
   - Wednesday, March 16, 2011
   - 6:30 PM - Q and A
   -

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)
   - Thursday, March 17, 2011
   - 6:30 PM - Q and A
   -

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE–OR NOR ENOUGH?

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE – OR NOT ENOUGH?
By John L Curth — Member Phoenix PC Users Group

Three years ago I purchased a new HP desktop computer with all of the amenities that at that time I was comfortable with. I would have built my own, but at the time I was convalescing from an injury that happened earlier. So at this time I figured why go through all the hassle and get what they had on sale. Here it is - BLACK FRIDAY - and this thing is on sale with a really nice sized monitor. Needless to say, I think I made a very good purchase and I'm still pleased with it.

Since that time various items have gone on sale and having the knowledge of how this computer is put together I purchased a new 1 TB hard drive for $60.00. But at this time the computer is now 3 years old and completely out of warranty/ guarantee.

When I did the hard drive install, I also installed Windows 7 that I had received from Microsoft a few months before and with that I did a double whammy.

Surprisingly the install of Windows 7 onto the new hard drive was relatively easy and straightforward. I thought I would have to wait for the drive to be formatted but Microsoft did the "Quick Format" which took about 2 seconds and the installation of Windows 7 was now on its way. Total installation time – I would say, 20/25 minutes. Life is Good.

Time moved on and I was thinking about what to do with the old 400 GB hard drive. As I thought about it I got the idea to use it as a back-up of some of the files that I've collected or even perhaps as a complete back-up for the new drive. Decisions on what I could do had me purchase an external cable connection to access that drive. That was easy since the local store had one on sale for $20.00.

Once home again I connected the cables and power supply to the SATA hard drive and plugged that into my USB port. Nothing happened but I thought I would be able to access it in the Microsoft program "Disk Manager". Once there it showed the drive is "Not Initialized". So I left clicked on the place where it showed the drive andin that menu it would allow me to initialize the drive. Now a new dialog box comes up and tells me it can't do that with any other explanation.

I went up to the Help menu and did a search on Initialize hard disk and it came up and said something to the effect that there was no "MBR" (Master Boot Record).

I remembered from DOS that when you format a hard drive you can run fdisk and add /mbr which would now rewrite the Master Boot Record and allow me to move forward. (Or so I thought)

Not so and after looking high and low, trying so many different items which included purchasing software that would wipe the hard drive down to nothing I came up with no success. My complaint at this time was now looking at HP and thought that HP had done something to the bios that made it unique and or very possibly prioritized. With that in mind I thought I could get a boot up disk and somehow manage to run the dos file fdisk/ mbr.

Again not so, what I did do is, I took the hard drive and the external connections out to the Microsoft Store in Scottsdale. There I was allowed to go to the Answer Desk and present my problem to the Tech behind the counter. He took the hard drive and the cabling connections and power supply and connected them to his laptop computer right in front of me. Went into Disk Management and he too couldn't see the hard drive. Looked down at the connections and made sure that they were connected correctly and then looked at the power supply and said: Right there is your problem. That power supply isn't putting out.

Wait here I'll be right back. He went back to retrieve a different power supply and proceeded to connect that one to the hard drive.

Hello! Pay dirt had happened. The hard drive was now active and I could do whatever I wanted to do with it.

I now learned something that I've not known before.

First, don't assume that everything works right out of the box because it doesn't. I returned the faulty external connections and power supply back and purchased a different manufacture and this one is working fine.

Second, I found out that Microsoft changed the boot up procedure and no longer uses the mbr in DOS at all. (Both Vista and Windows 7 uses a file called bootmgr) If you have a Vista or Windows 7 DVD you can insert it into your computer while running and look at the files, it's there.

This was truly a learning experience for me. All through the heartburn and the try this and that I found out that the more you know, the more you need to know.

INTERNET SHOPPING

INTERNET SHOPPING -
A VIEW OF ONE OF THE BEST
Part 2
By Ron Hirsch - Boca Raton Computer Society
RonHirsch1439 at comcast.net

This is the second and final part of this article on Newegg. In part 1, I listed all the niceties that Newegg offers when you are looking for a product. In part 2 I will cover the numerous great things that occur after you place your order

COMMUNICATION DURING THE ORDER

I personally feel that poor communication is one of the very serious problems in this world today, at all levels of society. But Newegg's communications are superb. Here are the emails you will receive after placing an order.

Immediately after you place your order, you will receive an email confirming your order placement.

Shortly after that, a second email will arrive, confirming that your credit card has been successfully charged.

Within the next 48 hours or so, a third email will arrive, stating that your order has shipped, and a tracking number is shown below in a hot link.

Click on this link, and window will open on the shipper's site, giving details of your delivery status.

You do not have to copy the tracking number, and then go to the UPS, or FEDEX site, and paste in there. Newegg takes care of all of that automatically.

The final email that comes is a copy of your invoice, which you can print out, if you have not already done so.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH NEWEGG

There are three excellent and practical ways to communicate with Newegg.

The first is via email. They will generally reply very quickly, usually within 24 hours.

The second is to call them on their 800 number, where you will get a capable person to talk with, generally with a minimum of "hold" time.

The third way is to enter into a live chat. This is essentially texting to them. You enter your message to them via the keyboard, and they respond. Often they will text you that they must look up info, and to please be patient.

I have made it a practice to compose my initial message to them prior to starting this process.
My typing skills are poor, and if I have a lot to say in my inquiry, I want to prepare it prior to getting someone on my case, and then having them wait for minutes until I get my message keyed in. So I just type the message into a blank document in a text editor such as Notepad, MS Word, WordPerfect, or whatever. After I have it all typed out, I then select it all, and copy it to the clipboard, and then paste it into the message box on the live chat screen.

IF THERE IS A PROBLEM AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR ORDER

Here is another area where Newegg really stands head and shoulders above most other suppliers. And I got very extensive experience in this area during my latest computer build.

I had purchased almost two dozen items for my new computer, and its peripheral items. Unfortunately, several of the manufacturers must have been having a bad run of quality control, and a number of these items were
nonfunctional right out of the box – not Newegg's fault of course. Here is where Newegg shines brightly.

I contacted them about the problem, and shortly after, they replied to me via email with an RMA number, and a link to their site where I could download and print out a prepaid UPS label. Then I was instructed to repackage the item with all its accessories in the original packaging, paste on the UPS label, and drop it off at the nearest UPS location. When they receive the item, they will then send out a replacement ASAP

INTERNET SHOPPING

Alternatively, a second option is offered. If I wanted the replacement faster, or I did not have the original packaging material anymore. I could do the following – place a new order for the same item, and have it charged to my credit card. Then when I received the new order, I could use that packing material along with the prepaid UPS label to them to return the defective item to them. When they received it, they would then credit my credit card for the second purchase.

SUMMARY - AND MY OVERALL VIEW OF NEWEGG

Dealing with Newegg these past months has been such a pleasant and rewarding experience, that I have established a new personal policy for all my future purchases when Newegg is a potential supplier.

If they do indeed offer the product I seek, and even if their pricing is slightly higher than the competition, I will buy from them.

Too often, people lose sight of the fact that a very important part of any purchase of any type, anywhere, is the service one will receive, not only during the purchase, but also after the product is received.

While I have found companies who may be good in some of these areas, I have never found a company who is as good as Newegg in all these areas. And no, I am not writing this because I will get anything special from the company. I just wanted to share my experiences with all of you, and do all I can to keep this company prospering, as I hope to continue dealing with them for many years.

One further comment – they have a daily mailing which offers special bargains, often with free shipping, and very special pricing for limited periods. If you'd like to receive their emails, go to their site, and sign up for these daily emails.

If more companies took a lesson from Newegg, online shopping could become a very pleasant experience every time. I know that when I shop with Newegg, my hassles are over. If you've never shopped with them, consider them in the future, and I'm sure you will agree with my views.

HAPPY SHOPPING

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php.

This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference.

Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in the Boca Bits hard copy. So, if there are color elements in the original, the PDF copy will display them that way.

A NOTE FROM YOUR PUBLISHER/WEBMASTER

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE

This month we would like to thank John Curth for sharing his problem solving experiences with us while installing a 1 TB hard drive on his desktop computer.

Come on folks! I know there are members with informative stories that they could share with the rest of us in the Newsletter. Please do so.

While our big push this year is to increase our membership, Michael Bishop and I are making a big push to get more articles from our readers.

Web Tour is on hiatus for the time being as I have to increase the time I can spend working on our Website. If any member has found an interesting place on the internet, would they please share it with us. Give us even a rough outline and we will incorporate it into a finished Web Tour article.

If you will peruse our Website, you will discover it has the most up-to-date Phoenix Group information available. Soon it will include some new features, as well.

Bill

MAKING WIRELESS INTERNET FASTER

MAKING WIRELESS INTERNET FASTER
by Vinny La Bash, vlabash@comcast.net
Member of the Sarasota, Florida
Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

A wireless network works on the same principle as any other communications network. It is a collection of various devices connected to each other in a way that allows data to flow unimpeded, and unchanged from one device to another. The main difference is that in a wireless network, there is no physical connection between or among the different devices. The main advantage of a wireless network is portability within the range of the network. The main drawback is that the quality of the communications signal can vary greatly within the range of the network sometimes resulting in disruption of communications services.

Some Basics: For simplicity, our discussion will be restricted to internet based home wireless networks. There is no need to delve into the complications of corporate, military or other kinds of complex communications networks. The basic equipment required to set up a home network is:

1. An internet service provider (ISP) that provides access to the internet.
2. A modem that provides access to the ISP.
3. A router that broadcasts the wireless signal.
4. Devices such as laptops, desktops and printers that receive the signal through a network interface card (NIC).

There are several standards for wireless networks developed by the group that regulates the industry's standards, The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). Amongst these standards are those that set criteria for data transmission speeds. Don't buy, or accept from your ISP, a wireless router before determining how fast it transmits data. Manufacturers are required to display the standard in their product specifications. Either get the information from your ISP or look for these specifications on the box.

Regardless of your experience level with wireless networks, don't consider anything less than standard 802.11g. Most "g" devices are not only inexpensive, but far superior to the older 802.11 "a" or "b" wireless routers. Besides being competitively priced, "g" routers have far superior network security. 802.11b routers offer only Wired Equivalent Privacy security (WEP). 802.11g routers have Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA), which overcomes the weaknesses of WEP.

How large are the files you upload and download from the internet? If you normally do not move large files in either direction standard 802.11g will do fine, and it has the additional advantage of being cheap. If you are moving large files, then go for a Faster, Super G router.

The most common problem with home wireless networks is either loss of signal or a signal that is too weak to allow reliable connections. One way to solve this is by boosting the signal. If you're willing to spend a few bucks you can plug a Hawking HAI15SC Hi-Gain Wireless Corner Antenna into your router and enhance signal strength from the standard 2dBi to up to 15dBi. Before you run out and buy this enhancement be sure that your router has a removable antenna. Check your router's manual or contact the manufacturer for information.

If your router doesn't have a removable antenna there is an alternate, but higher priced method to increase signal strength. A Wireless-G Range Expander also does the job. It has a great advantage that it does not have to be physically connected to any part of your network. All that's necessary is that it be in range of the router. The device works similar to a "repeater" in cellular networks. It performs well in multi-story homes, back yards, lanais, and other outdoor venues.

The Expander is compatible with the Linksys WAP54G Access Point, and both the WRT54G and WRT54GS Wireless Routers. It also works with Wireless-G and Wireless-B clients.

Everyone who uses or who is contemplating using a wireless network is rightly concerned with performance. But don't let performance issues blind you to proper security. The fastest wireless network on the planet won't do you much good if a hacker is robbing you at the speed of light.

Wireless networks have become very common for individuals and organizations. A new PC is very likely to have wireless access pre-installed. Hackers have become adept at breaking into wireless networks, and you should not overlook this danger while enhancing performance.

At a minimum you should change any default passwords and select a method that will securely encrypt your data should your protection methods be compromised. Your local PC user group is a great resource for giving you this kind of assistance. Don't overlook this abundant source of expertise.

SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE-SUPPORT

Smart Computing *In Plain English* smartcomputing.com

There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a 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.

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FILES, FOLDERS, AND NOW LIBRARIES

FILES AND FOLDERS, AND NOW LIBRARIES
by Phil Sorrentino
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group

Just when you thought you had it all mastered, something new comes along to possibly change things. Well, it's not really that bad, it's actually pretty good. Libraries are a new concept in organization that has been introduced in Windows 7. You don't have to use Libraries, but they are there to help you organize and access your files. (Files being the entities that all programs work with.)
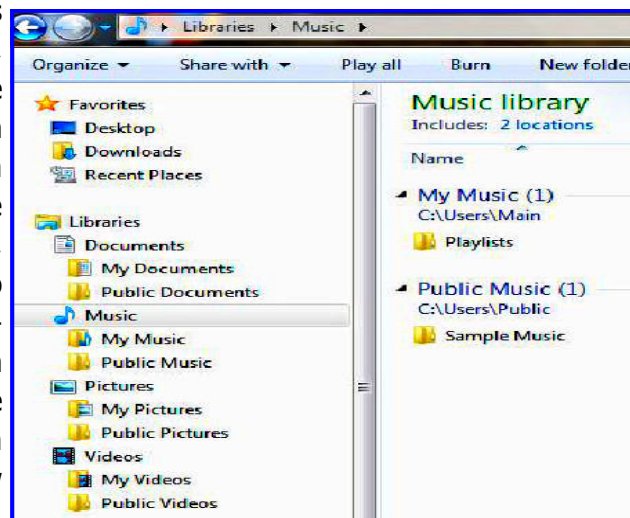
Windows 7 initially includes Libraries for Documents, Music, Pictures, and Video, the four categories of information that many people use. You can create other libraries; you are not limited to only Documents, Music, Pictures and Video. To create a new Library, Right-Click "Libraries", and then select "New-Library", and give the New Library a name (much the same way we create new Folders).

As you can see , initially each Library includes a "My" folder and a "Public" folder. Windows 7 expects each user to organize his/her information into private and public folders. The contents of the public folders are then shared with other users on your computer. New Folders can be included in a library by using the Library Properties window. Right-click on the Library you want to add a folder to, then select Properties, and then add a Folder to the current list of "Library Locations" by clicking the "Include File Folder…" button, and then naming, or navigating to, the Folder to be included in the Library. Folders can be removed from a Library by Right-Clicking the folder to be deleted and selecting Delete.

A file, as you will remember from one of our basic classes, is a collection of related information. That information is organized in a certain way and the applications that use that "type" of file knows the organization scheme and therefore how to use the information. The file type is kept with the file name and is actually the extension part of the file name, (the letters after the period). For example, the file "picture1.jpg" is a jpg type of file. (If you don't see the file extensions after the period when using Windows Explorer, it is because Windows is initially defaulted to not show the extensions. To show the file extensions, Click Start, then Click Control Panel, then Double-Click the Folder Options icon, then Click View, then Uncheck the "Hide extensions for known file types" box, and finally, Click OK).

There are many types of files. In fact, if you Google "file types" you will find websites that describe hundreds of different file types. The "filext.com" website (and many others) has an alphabetical index to help you find a particular file type. To review information about a particular file type, click on the first letter of the file type of interest, then find the file type in the list and then click on that file type. (Caution: To be safe, if you do go to this or any other site to see information about file types, please do not click on any link you are not sure of, or any link that suggests a "scan" of your system or your system's registry or hard drive.) And while considering Files and folders, just to be complete, Folders are collections of Files and/or other Folders. Folders are essentially containers.

Now, Getting back to Libraries. Libraries are collections of folders. Libraries are a way of collecting information (files) in order to keep related things together. The Pictures Library is intended to keep track of all of your Pictures (jpg, jpeg, bmp, tiff, and other picture file types) in one spot, therefore making it easier to work with your pictures. Similarly, the Documents Library is intended to organize your documents (doc, docx, rtf, txt, and other text file types); the Music Library is intended to corral your

FILES, FOLDERS, AND NOW LIBRARIES

(Continued from page 9)

music files (mp3, wma, wav, m3u, and other music file types); and the Video Library is intended to corral your Video files (mpeg, avi, mov, vob, and other video file types).

Libraries can also be created to organize information for a specific purpose, say a Movie Maker Project. You could create a Library for a particular Movie, say the "OurWedding" movie. You would create a Library called OurWedding and then you would include, in that library, the working folders that you use while using your pictures, music and video applications. (The actual folders remain with the application, but they are viewed as part of the OurWedding library.) Then, when you create files using the various applications, all of the files relating to OurWedding would show up in one specific place, the OurWedding Library (a pretty neat trick, don't you think?). This is pretty good because it leaves the specific application to deal only with its specific type of file, and yet keeps all the project files in one place for the project application. (For example you could use Windows Media Player to Rip music from your CDs, Photoshop Elements to collect and finish the pictures of your wedding, and Adobe Premier Elements to preview and cut the videos for the movie. When all the Picture, Music, and Video files are done and in their folders, you could use Movie Maker with the OurWedding library to put it all together into a Movie and burn it to a DVD.)

Libraries provide a way of superimposing a structure or organization on what might look like an unorganized collection of files and folders. Libraries are really just another tool to be used to help us use our computers in a smart way. When you get Windows 7, give them a try but don't jump in too fast. First, organize your folders in a basic structure (the way you might think of organizing a file cabinet) and then apply Libraries on top of that basic organization, to your benefit. In time, I'm sure you'll find Libraries helpful. :

BUSINESS CARDS

How to Submit Commercial Advertisements

Send commercial ad copy and payments to:
Ad Manager, Phoenix PCUG Newsletter,
5555 N 7th Street Suite 5 PMB 101
Phoenix, AZ 85014

Make checks payable to Phoenix PCUG
(Note: AD PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY AD unless credit arrangements have been made).
Commercial advertising rates per issue are shown below. Submit camera-ready black and white copy.

Typesetting service and photographic services provided at additional cost and must be scheduled and paid for IN ADVANCE. Payment must accompany ad. Copy will not be returned unless return postage is prepaid. Single insertion ad rates are as follows:

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Quarter Page (3.75" by 5.0") $15.00 Note: Oversized ads are charged to the next higher size rate!!
Business Cards (2.0" by 3.5") $ 5.00 (minimum of 3 months prepaid)

For questions please contact David Yamamoto 602 418-1249 or write to above.

Submission deadlines are the 25th of each month prior to month of publication. Prices subject to change without notice.

NEAT THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH A FLASH DRIVE

by Vinny La Bash, vlabash@comcast.net
Member of the Sarasota, Florida
Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

By now you're probably tired of reading about how much better Windows 7 is than Vista. Me too, so let's spend some time examining some of the things you can do with a flash drive other than mere data storage. A USB flash drive consists of a flash memory data storage device integrated with a USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface. USB flash drives are easily removable, and much smaller than a floppy disk. They are rewritable, and usually weigh less than an ounce. There is a wide range of storage capacities with the most common being from 2 GB to 32 GB. Higher capacities up to 256 GB tend to be pricey.

One of the most useful things you can do with a flash drive is to run portable applications. Open Office, for example, is a free suite of programs that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, data manager, presentation tool, and drawing package. You can store the suite as a portable application, and run it on any computer that supports Windows. Firefox and Thunderbird are also available as mobile applications.

Having office applications, email, and an internet browser all pooled in a portable drive you can carry on a key chain is a powerful combination. If you want more go to www.portableapps.com for an open source platform that works with iPods and portable hard drives in addition to flash drives. The platform is not only free, but it's a full function site. You are not limited to a trial period or a limited function subset. There is no sign in requirement, and no necessity to provide even an email address. Go for it.

Everyone wants a faster system. With either Windows Vista or Windows 7, the built-in ReadyBoost feature can speed up your computer with a USB flash drive. ReadyBoost takes the storage space on a USB flash drive and converts it into an additional memory cache that supplements the main memory cache on your primary disk drive. It can do this because flash memory is faster than regular disk drives. It's faster because it has no moving parts, and you can get a noticeable improvement in

response time. Implementing ReadyBoost is simplicity itself. Insert the USB flash drive into the USB slot on your computer and follow the configuration prompts.

If you work or live in an environment where other folks have physical access to your computer you can use your flash drive to lock everyone else out of your PC. There is no built-in utility like ReadyBoost for this, but you can download a free tool called Predator from www.brothersoft.com that provides this function. Predator uses a standard USB flash drive as an access control device. After performing a short installation and configuration process, your flash disk becomes a key that will lock and unlock your PC. When you leave your PC remove the USB flash drive. This causes the screen to go blank while disabling the mouse and keyboard. When you ready to resume, put the flash drive back, and everything returns to normal. Move over, Mr. Bond, Predator is here.

All the preceding capabilities are very convenient, but how would you like to carry around a portable operating system? If you are willing to expend a little time and energy you can configure a USB flash drive to be a bootable Windows 7 drive. You will need a flash drive with a capacity of al least 8 gigabytes, and of course a Windows 7 installation disk. Start out by inserting your flash drive into its USB socket and inserting the Windows 7 installation disk in the optical drive. Please make a note of the drive letters. This is essential for successful installation.

Preparing the flash drive is the next step. Click on the Start orb and type: Diskpart

Pressing Enter opens a command window. (After typing a command at the command prompt always press Enter to execute the command.) At the prompt type: List Disk

You will see a list of all your hard drives, partitions, optical drives, card reader drives, and flash drives. Identify the optical drive that contains the Windows 7 installation disk and the flash drive you're working with. For this example we'll assume the flash drive is

FREE "CHEATSHEETS"

FREE "CHEAT SHEETS"
FOR SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE
By Ira Wilsker

Recently, I was asked to teach an eight hour non-credit class on Excel to the employees of a local company. I know by experience that handouts are a popular adjunct for any class, so I had to find some useful handouts for this Excel class; so called "cheat sheets" are as good as any other handout, so I   proceeded to print a set of Excel cheat sheets for Excel versions 2003, 2007, and 2010. The information on those cheat sheets alone was more than adequate for a one-day class, and could have also been used for a longer class.

In this context, a "cheat sheet" is not a device used by a college student in an act of academic dishonesty, but a digital or printed copy of instructions for a software product that clearly explains and shows how to use the features and functions of that product. In addition to   the various versions of Microsoft Office, free cheat sheets are available for many other PC, MAC, LINUX, and other computer related software and hardware products. While most of the free cheat sheets are for software products, some cheat sheets, called by their publisher:

How To Easily Build Your Own Cheap Computer
The Awesome Automation Guide for Mac Users
The (Very) Unofficial Facebook Privacy Guide The
Office Worker's 101 Guide to a USB Thumb Drive
The Windows 7 Guide: From Newbies To Pros
The Ultimate Guide To Gmail
Your Guide To Create Professional Documents on Word
The Internet Music Guide For The Audiophile
The Essential Guide To Digital Photography
A Newbie's Getting Started Guide to Linux,
The Mac Manual
The Underground iPhone Guide
The Big Book Of iTunes

There are about 25 other such titles.

One of the best sources of free software cheat sheets is:

 Custom Guide's "Quick References",

It is available online at http://bit.ly/ahE22r. On this Quick Reference page are free   PDF format cheat sheets for Office 2010, Excel 2010, Outlook 2010, PowerPoint 2010,

and Word 2010. With free registration, the user can also access the full collection of Custom   Guide's Quick References, including the 2007 and 2003 versions of the Office products, as well as Microsoft's OneNote,   Project (2007 and 2003), Publisher, SharePoint, and Visio. There are also Quick References for Windows 7, Vista, and XP. Apple users may also find these "Quick Reference Guides" useful, as there are guides for Appleworks, MAC OS, Microsoft Entourage, and the Apple versions of Microsoft Word, Excel,   and PowerPoint. Some of the guides for Adobe products are available for both the PC / MAC versions, and include Acrobat, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, and Photoshop.

Almost all of the Custom Guide's Quick References are of a similar design and format as downloadable PDF files. The guides are in full color, and typically two pages in length. They   all display the opening screen of the product with all of the features labeled with a clear and concise explanation of each item. If there is a ribbon or menu bar in the software, the guide labels each function on the image of the item, and presents a summary of the functions in a table adjacent to the image. Most of the products covered by the guides also have a selection of "keyboard shortcuts" displayed that can be used to increase the speed and efficiency of the user by using these shortcuts rather than clicking on menu items. Commonly done tasks like copying something can be accomplished by utilizing the common Windows shortcut CTRL-C, and then pasting the item with CTRL-V; this is much quicker than clicking on the menu and then scrolling to COPY, and repeating the menu process and clicking on PASTE. In many Office products (including competitors to Microsoft Office), formatting can also be done with intuitive shortcuts, such as CTRL-B for bold, CTRLU for underline, CTRL-I for italics, and several other similar shortcuts; these shortcuts are among the dozens displayed in the Quick Reference guides. The guides also include information (as appropriate) for formatting, graphics, editing, styles, animations, special effects, tables, and other functions of the software. There is a lot of very useful information crammed into these two-page guides, and they would be ideal for all users of these products, regardless of experience level. These are precisely the handouts that I use in my non-credit software classes.

(Continued from page 13)

The "MakeUseOf Guides" available free from http://bit.ly/aCFTET are also downloadable in PDF format. While these guides are free, a one-time registration is necessary to download them. In addition to the "MakeUseOfGuides", there are also dozens of other free guides available for download (free registration required) at http://bit.ly/dhWElB. Some guides that I have used to learn shortcuts include guides for Firefox, Gmail, Linux, and Internet Explorer. MAC users may find useful the shortcut guides for OS X, and the MAC versions of Firefox. Since its release, I have been using Windows 7 as my primary home computer, and have found:

The Ultimate Windows 7 Guide: From Newbies To Pros

This is a very helpful document. This free 50 page guide (PDF) to Windows 7 is written in an easy to read and understand format, and contains useful information and tips for Windows 7 users of all levels. I have used "The Essential Guide To Digital Photography" to help me with my digital camera, and since it seems that almost everyone today has a digital camera, this guide may be invaluable. I know a lot of people who use Google's Gmail service as their email provider, and the "The Ultimate Guide To Gmail" is 35 pages full of Gmail hints, tips, and ideas. "The Incredible Free Manual For Every Mac User" is a 69 page ebook (PDF) with a treasure trove of information for MAC users. In all, there are 32 such ebooks available.

With all of this free information available for computer users, there should be several titles that would be of interest to just about everyone. I use some of these "cheat sheets" in the classes that I teach, and recommend them as needed to my students and coworkers. You too may find them very useful. Listen to Ira's "My Computer Show" on News Talk AM560 KLVI. Now streaming on the "net, Mondays, 6-7pm Central Time, KLVI.Com. Also read his weekly computer and technology column in the Examiner, http://www.theexaminer.com Click on the "Front Page" image and scroll to my column. Ira can also be reached at iwilsker@sbcglobal.net. ♪

(Continued from page 12)

disk #4, also designated as G and the optical drive is disk #2, also designated as D.

At the command prompt type: Select Disk 4

Run the following commands:

- Clean
- Create
- Primary
- Partition Select Partition 1
- Active Format FS=FAT32
- Assign
- Exit

This series of commands erased extraneous material from the flash drive, created an active primary partition, and formatted it with the FAT32 file system. The next step is to copy the Windows 7 installation files to the flash drive.

At the command prompt type: Xcopy D:*.* /S/E/F G

In this example D is the drive housing the Windows 7 installation disk and G is the USB flash drive. The command copies the installation files to the flash drive, and when it finishes you have a bootable Windows 7 flash drive. The last thing you need to do to make this work is go into the BIOS and make the first bootable device the flash drive.

Carrying a flash drive around is obviously far more convenient than carrying a DVD, and has the additional advantage of being faster than a DVD. This procedure also works for Windows Vista, but why bother when Windows 7 is here?
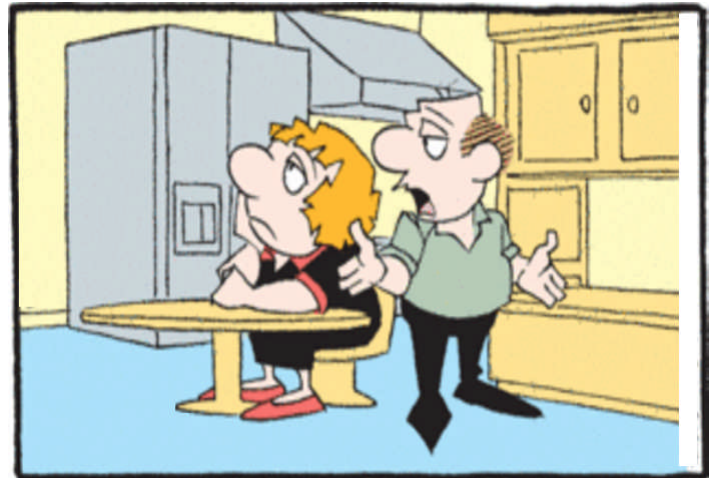
Short Circuits...zzzt!

Taser Tease. A Taser may not be enough to stop a moose. Biologists with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game failed in their attempts to stun a cow moose to remove a rope around its neck that was used to rescue it from a river last. Biologists said the moose appeared to react only to the sound of the Taser going off, and it started running. Rescuers decided to leave the cow, which was accompanied by a calf. They said the rope is not hindering her ability to breathe, eat or walk - and may just fall off eventually.
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner February 15, 2011

No Such Number. Dark days are ahead for the white pages. Regulators in many states are giving phone companies permission to stop printing residential listings since fewer people are using them. Companies like Verizon and AT&T argue that consumers now depend on the Internet and mobile phone applications to search for the numbers they need. More people are also ditching land lines altogether. The move helps the companies' bottom line and reduces environmental impact by eliminating the need for all paper and ink for the heavy directories that started with a single page 132 years ago. Several states have recently approved requests to halt distribution of white pages.
Associated Press November 11, 2010.

"I CAN KEEP LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS! WHAT ABOUT THE TIME I WAITED FOR THE CABLE REPAIRMAN?"

Vexed Hexers. Solace for world leaders trying to enforce painful austerity measures: At least you're not running Romania. Angry witches in the town of Mogosoia are using cat droppings and dead dogs to cast spells on the president and government who are forcing them to pay taxes. Also in the eye of the taxman are fortune tellers, who (perhaps) should have seen it coming. And President Traian Basescu isn't laughing it off. In a country where superstition is mainstream, the president and his aides wear purple on Thursdays allegedly to ward off evil spirits.
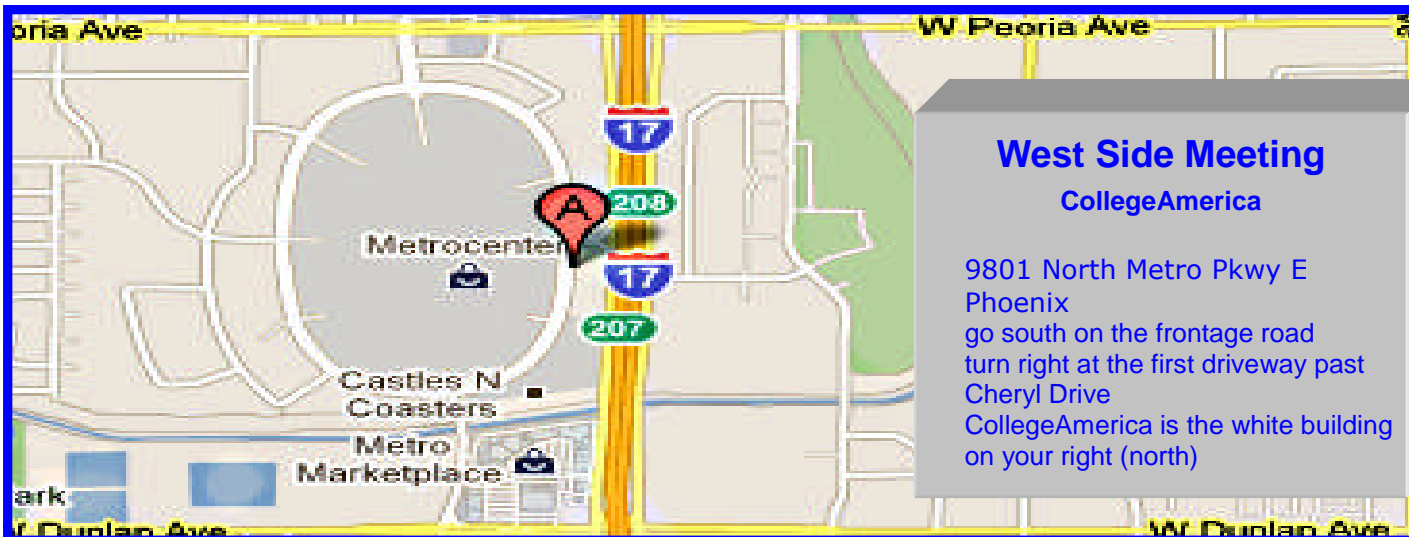*Associated Press* January 5, 2011

I.C.U! The Transportation Security Administration began testing on Tuesday new software that will transmit more modest images of travelers' bodies on some of its controversial airport screening machines.The new software is designed to detect potential explosives and show them on a blurred "generic outline" of a person projected a monitor that can be seen by screeners and travelers. The outline will be identical for all passengers. Tests on the software -- which is only for scanners that use wave technology and not X-ray machines -- come after an outcry and a failed boycott last year by travelers who complained the machines present a graphic, naked image of them on a screen viewed by TSA security personnel. Travelers identified by the new software as carrying potential threats will require additional screening. If no threat items are detected, an "OK" will appear on the monitor.
Associated Press February 15, 2001

@#!*%?!%!

"Doing my own taxes is cheaper, but the computer sounds just like my accountant"

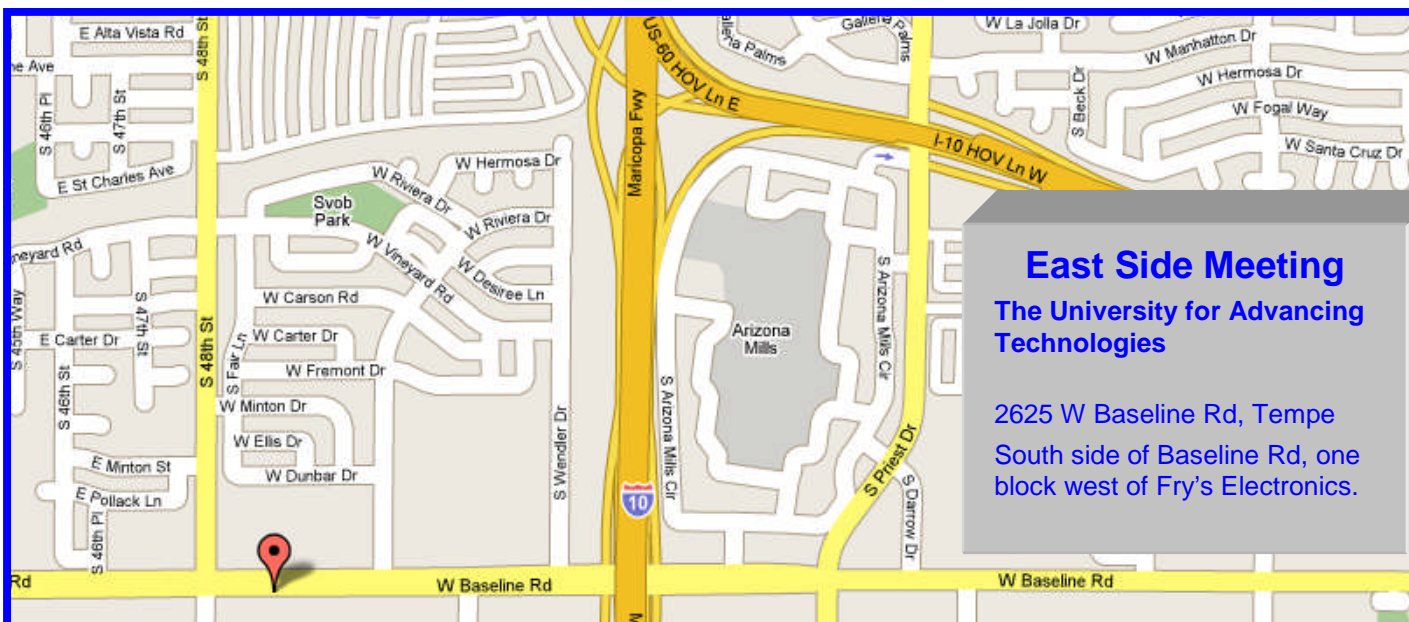*These items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.*

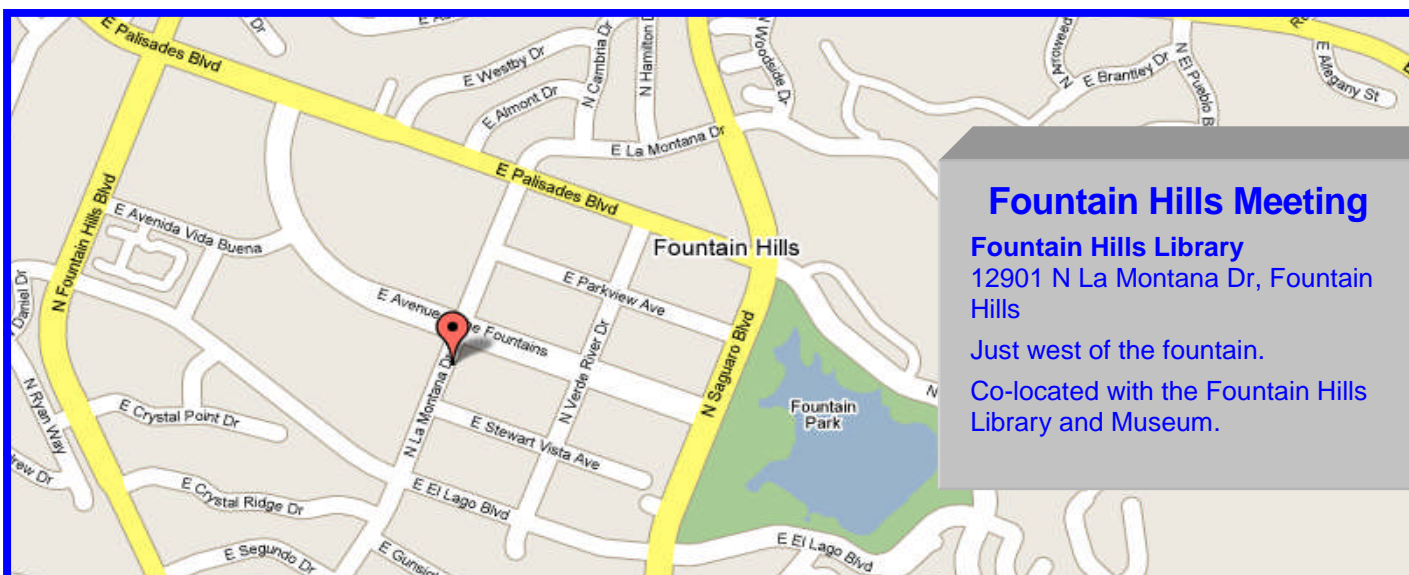# HOW TO GET THERE

West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

9801 North Metro Pkwy E
Phoenix
go south on the frontage road
turn right at the first driveway past
Cheryl Drive
CollegeAmerica is the white building
on your right (north)

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 Library
12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills

Just west of the fountain.

Co-located with the Fountain Hills Library and Museum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

DUES $36
THROUGH
DEC 31, 2011

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Print Legibly) _____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

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

E-mail address: _____(Print Legibly)

Signature _____Date___/___/___

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

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   ☐

Mail this completed form with payment to:

Phoenix PC Users Group
PO Box 7127
Phoenix, AZ 85011-7127

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

March 2011

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

STAMP