NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side…….…...Tue, April 19

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side…….…...Wed, April 20

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

Fountain Hills….….Thu, April 21

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

Presentation this month:

Our Treasurer Lo
will discuss the differences and
advantages of recent versions of
the Microsoft Office Suites

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

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Steering Committee:

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Greetings everybody,

Arizona Japan Relief - the Phoenix Japanese Friendship Garden has been very successful in raising funds for disaster relief but still wants your help. Please Google for newsletters, activities & events. Director is Diana Larowe.

As a computer consultant, I've noticed this month's topics are very useful, however here are some observations:

IEEE 802.11n is the latest wireless router standard with better security, speed and distance.

Avoid wireless Internet for your banking, purchases or finances. Wireless can be hacked. So always use a hardwired connection with a physical connection to your PC for top security.

For upgrading your software from Microsoft, Adobe, etc. use Google to search for and use manufactures' web sites only to avoid hacker mirror sites. Tiny URL or other article links can be suspicious.

To purchase routers & devices - use professional product reviews such as PC Magazine, etc. Some store products can be out-dated, hence cheaper. Download the latest manuals and drivers also.

Decrapifier is generally considered to be a good way to remove software that is unneeded on a new PC.

Also, Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced sections are being planned for our website and meetings to help users of differing levels of experience.

Don't forget Gene Barlow Acronis backup ideas and the Boy Scout swap meet April 17, 2011.

We can review all these and other topics in future meetings.

Our BOD meeting had many exciting ideas and we look forward to telling you about them next week.

David

FROM YOUR EDITOR

It is interesting to note what the impact of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan has had on industries throughout the world. Assemblers of electronic devices in many countries have had to slow down or even halt their production since key components are made only in Japan. But the problem is more than just the shortage of materials for electronic devices. Similar shortages are being felt in other sectors of the industrial world as well. For instance, the Ford motor company is not taking orders for red or black trucks because the paint supply has been shut off.

The problems with the nuclear power plants on the eastern coast of the main island of Honshu have spawned a considerable amount of controversy over the potential hazards of using this method of electric power generation. Sadly, the amount of information being received from the officials on the scene is fragmentary. Some of this is certainly due to the complexity of locating and containing sources of leaking radiation. But the current penchant of the news media is to characterize the severity of the current problem as an event as apocalyptic as the detonation of a nuclear weapon. Such hype has caused questionable, even irrational, behavior in other parts of the world. To wit: the panic buying of potassium iodide as a preventive measure against radiation on the West Coast of the US (10,000 kilometers from the epicenter !) and the German government's reversal of their recent twelve-year extension of nuclear power reactor shutdown to an immediate closure of seven of their current reactors.

What is certain to happen in the immediate future is an abundance of strident calls for the immediate development of low-cost, sustainable, environmentally benign methods of electric power generation. Unfortunately, that dream is a 4-fold oxymoron. Consider a recent quote by Vinod Khasla, (a co-founder of Sun Microsystems and the entrepreneur who actually provided the non-governmental funds for startup of the Internet) in The Economist, (April 12, 2011),"Wind projects are a waste of time…the realization is that electric cars are coal-powered, because the USA and Europe have mostly coal-based electricity." Now THAT is An Inconvenient Truth.

Michael

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)
- Tuesday, April 19, 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 18)
- Wednesday, April 20, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 18)
- Thursday, April 21, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

Our Treasurer Lo
will discuss the differences and
advantages of recent versions of
the Microsoft Office Suites
If you get lost using Word 2007 or 2010
do not miss this presentation

JOIN US AT THE BOY SCOUTS ELECTRONICFEST

OUR TABLE WILL INTRODUCE US TO THE PUBLIC
By Allen Hunt VP Phoenix PC Users Group
Vicepres@PhoenixPCUG.org

The Boy Scout's Troop 446 will be hosting an Electronicfest, Sunday, April 17th at the Scottsdale Pavilions Shopping Center (9069 East Indian Bend Road), Scottsdale, AZ next to the "Five and Diner".

I will be there with a table set up to represent our PC Users Group. We will be handing out our Newsletters and Brochures. The object is to let more people know about our group and possibly gain some new members. I hope some of the other members can join us at 6:15 AM. Bring along your electronic items you wish to dispose of. Yes, it is early but it is worth it to discover what these Boy Scouts have created.

Computer and electronics shopping has never been better, or more exciting than at this computer swap meet and recycling event . It is held the third Sunday of each month.

Start time is 5:30am (that's when most of the vendors are set up), with an electronics recycling dropoff station (look for the large Westech truck) ready to accept donations by 6am. Advice for first time shoppers…the best deals on new and used computers, flat screens, and lap tops happen in the wee hours of the morning in the dark. Shopping hours hit the peak at 7:30am and run hard until a live computer auction at 9am.

The dates for the rest of the year are:

 May 15
 June 19
 July 17
 Aug 21
 Sept 18
 Oct 16
 Nov 20
 Dec 18

Electronicfest is the largest ongoing computer and electronics recycling event and swap meet in the southwestern United States.

It started more than 20 years ago, outside of a small computer repair shop in south Scottsdale, that was owned by one of the scout's fathers. Boy Scouts Receive a Computer Donation

It has always been held on Sunday's because thats when his shop was closed for the week, and the scouts soon discovered that other computer shops liked to sell at their meet too on Sunday's because they too were closed for business. The scouts swap meet gave the computer shop owners a chance to visit with one another, meet computer shoppers, and sell off old or unused equipment to one another. In a few years time, the computer swap meet

and recycling event grew to close to one hundred vendors, and ran the 3rd Sunday morning every month inside the old Los Arcos Mall (on McDowell Road & Scottsdale Road), it has since been torn down, and is now the ASU Skysong campus.

The glory years of the scouts computer swap meet were in the 1990's at the old Smitty's grocery store parking lot across from the Motorola plant in south Scottsdale, on McDowell Road between Hayden and Miller Roads. The venue was rather spartan, in than the closest restroom was at the 7-11 store down the way, but the lease terms were great. The City of Scottsdale was very gracious in allowing the scouts to operate the monthly computer recycling and swap meet rent free, as long as we properly maintained it.

Scouts Sales Area at ElectronicfestAround 2005 the lease on the property on McDowell Road expired, to become a retirement home. So the boy scouts from Troop 446 (chartered to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Scottsdale) moved to the campus of Scottsdale Community College. The SCC staff were very kind to the scouts, and did their best to make the computer swap meet successful. The problem was that we had to pay rent for our space (a first for us) so we charged a parking fee to cover
that cost, which proved disastrous for the event, and almost failed, if it weren't for the move to the present site at Scottsdale Pavilions Shopping Center on Indian Bend Road and the 101 Freeway.
We moved to the Scottsdale Pavillions around 2007, where they along with the Salt River Pima Indian Community were very gracious in allowing the scouts to operate with free rent, and limited permiting to continue the swap meet.

A year later, the boy scouts computer swap meet was rebranded Electronicfest to embrace the changes with computerization, and all the gadgetry that was influenced by that. Our recycling efforts grew dramatically with our new partnership with Westech Recyclers, lead by owner and original boy scout swap meet vendor Earl Knudsen, and his director of development Tom Holland. Their monthly attendance at our event, where they take, haul, and pay the scouts for the electronics waste that has been donated allowed the scouts to promote electronics recycling fully, without the fear they'd be short handed to handle the electronics recycling drop-offs (which had been a problem in past years).

Today, the swap meet – Electronicfest – is alive and well. Many of the first vendors are still there, and so are many of the shoppers. The event varies in size from month to month with 30 to 45 vendors, and hundreds of shoppers. The recycling program has been the best in the state of Arizona, in that we can take just about any kind of of electrical item – working or not – and find a good home for it: tv's, computers, crt monitors, flat screens, cables, radios, scanners, printers, copiers, white appliances (those are washers, refrigerators, dishwashers), small kitchen appliances, batteries, video tapes, software, and more. The proceeds raised from Electronicsfest help boy scouts from Arizona afford summer camp, eagle scout projects, and earn their way on scout camping trips and outings. Which teaches our young men that the way to life is by earning their way, not getting a hand out.

INSURE YOUR PRIVACY ON THE INTERNET

TIPS FOR ENSURING YOUR PRIVACY ON THE INTERNET

By Dick Maybach, Columnist,
Brookdale Computer User Group (BCUG)
Brookdale, NJ — www.bcug.org — n2nd@charter.net

We have all heard these before, but we can't be reminded enough about privacy on the Internet.

Introduction

When posting information to the Internet, keep three things in mind:

1. you can't restrict where it will go;
2. you can't restrict who will see it; and
3. it will stay there forever.

If you want to keep something private, don't post it. In the old (pre-Internet) days, if something you told a friend in confidence became public, it was his word against yours. It's much harder to deny a picture of you or an e-mail with your return address.

Information about you is most commonly posted on your personal Web site, on social networks, such as Facebook, and on photo sharing sites, such as Flickr.

Very few people would post their social security numbers or bank passwords, but you must also be careful with other data.

Be careful about disclosing information that could be used by an identity thief; this includes your birthday, address, and phone number.

Although much of this is this is readily available, you don't want to make a thief 's job easy. Your strategy here is like that of locking your car and house; it's not difficult to break into these, but if your neighbor doesn't lock up, he provides an easier, more attractive target.

Keep Personal Data Private

Don't forget that many banks make available hint questions to "help" you if your forget your password, so you should not disseminate personal data used in the hint questions, such as your mother's maiden name, your high school, your pet names, etc.

You should avoid taking the quizzes offered by some social websites, as they often ask the same questions about your personal life that are used in password hints.

Don't advertise when you will be away, even for a short time. The time to talk about your cruise or a concert is after you return home. You wouldn't put a note on your door saying that you will out for several hours or days, and you certainly don't want to do this on the Internet, where the information is available to many more people. Protect you children. Don't disclose their names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or where they attend school, especially if you show their pictures.

Small children should not have a computer in their bedroom; instead it should be in a public area of the house where you can check on their on-line activities. If your children have a social Web site, insist that you be a "friend" and check it often. This has to be done carefully, especially with teens, lest you appear to be meddling. However, since they already think you are a fossil, you probably won't damage your reputation much.

Although it isn't a privacy issue, don't publicly criticize your company or boss. While we would like to think that our employers are tolerant, some aren't, and an intemperate outburst could damage your career. This is especially true if your remarks could be interpreted as racial, religious, or sexual bias, as these could expose you to legal prosecution. Indeed, you will most likely regret any public tirade. At the least, it will make your friends think less of you. This also applies to e-mail. If you are really steamed, don't mail it immediately but let it sit as a draft for a day; then read it carefully after you have calmed down.

Don't Disclose Risky Behavior

Don't disclose any risky behavior in which you indulge. If you like to smoke, drink, rock climb, race cars, explore caves, or hang glide, your insurance company could decide they won't pay a future claim, because you failed to disclose the extra risks

INTERNET FASTER

INTERNET FASTER
Vinny La Bash
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Sarasota PCUG, Inc., FL
www.spcug.org

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:

- An internet service provider (ISP) that provides access to the internet.

- A modem that provides access to the ISP.

- A router that broadcasts the wireless signal.

-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 Wireless Routers. It also works with Wireless-G and Wireless-B clients.

INTERNET FASTER

INSURE YOUR PRIVACY ON THE INTERNET

(Continued from page 6)

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.

WE WANT TO INCREASE

OUR MEMBERSHIP

IF EACH MEMBER

BROUGHT JUST ONE

INTERESTED GUEST

TO A MEETING

WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL

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associated with such activities. As far as I know, they aren't yet doing this yet, but why take the chance they might begin, say 20 years from now,

Be very careful about posting pictures of you or your friends in compromising situations. Young people are especially likely to be trapped by this. In the recent election campaign, some candidates had to live down pictures taken at parties when they were in their teens and twenties.

This is a difficult problem, since cell phone cameras are now ubiquitous and such pictures are often published by "friends." You can contact the Web site and demand that the offending material be removed, but a better strategy is to be careful in public.

Even though you never publish anything, information about you is splattered all over the Internet. For example, a search for "Dick Maybach" produces almost 600 hits, and because my name is unusual, most of the them are about me. If you have a common name, you can to some extent hide in the haystack; for example, "John Doe" produces almost 3,000,000 hits.

However, even with a common name, adding a few details, such as your city (for example "John Doe" and "Middletown NJ"), will greatly improve the relevance of the results. If you find something to which you really object, you can contact the site and ask that it be removed, but success here is doubtful.

Finally, use the maximum privacy settings that your social networking site provides. In particular, limit access to your page to designated friends. Remember, that these sites make their money by disclosing your information to others. While it may be more convenient to use such sites than to send e-mails to friends, it adds substantial risk.

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END OF AN ERA ARRIVES FOR XP

END OF AN ERA ARRIVES FOR XP, SERVICE PACK 2

Bob de Violini
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Channel Islands PCUG, CA
The Outer Edge, August 2010
www.cipcug.org

The end of an era has come for Windows XP, Service Pack 2, and it bears noting. One survey found that over one-third of the PCs in the firms surveyed were running Windows XP SP2. I?m sure that quite a few of you reading this are also running XP SP2 as well, and this warning is for you. As of July 14, the day after Microsoft's Patch Tuesday, there will be no more security updates offered to anyone running XP SP2. However Microsoft will still offer phone, chat and email support for those running obsolete Service Packs, but for a fee of $49 for chat and e-mail or $59 for phone support. These fees are on a per incident basis, unless you've already purchased another type of support contract.

The latest Service Pack can be downloaded from the following Microsoft site for free:
http://tinyurl.com/4qvth5.
I shortened the actual URL to save space. You will want a broadband connection, and a higher speed one at that. The file is the complete installation (over 300 Megs in size), and by Microsoft's estimation it would still take nearly an hour to download on a 768k DSL connection. As an alternative, you can go to the Windows Update site, which will download a much smaller file initially. That file will then scan your system and download and install only the updates you actually need in order to bring your installation up to the full XP SP3. Support for XP SP3 will go until April 2014. As a reminder to those running Windows Vista, if you don't have any Service Pack installed, your support ran out back on April 13 of this year, so you need to grab a copy of SP1 for Vista and install it. There are a few updates (2 or 3 depending on your individual situation) that you must install before you can successfully install

SP1 on Vista. Send me an e-mail at the address at the top of this article for more info and a link to a page Microsoft has especially for those trying to get Vista SP1.

Lots of patches in June 2010

Although I haven't seen it labeled as such anywhere yet, June could be informally called Patch Month, with Microsoft releasing myriad patches (I counted 21 on each of my XP SP3 machines with MS Office 2003 on one and 2007 on the other, and a number well into the teens for my laptop, which has Vista SP2 and Office 2007) as well as Adobe and Mozilla releasing their own patches.

Adobe patched its Flash plug-in, bringing the version number up to 10.1.53.64, and Acrobat and Acrobat Reader versions 8 and 9, bringing them up to versions 8.2.3 and 9.3.3 respectively. The bugs in Flash, Acrobat and Acrobat Reader have been well publicized, so an update is in order. The update for Flash was released June 10, and the update for Acrobat and Acrobat Reader was released June 29. They are available here for Flash: http://bit.ly/mwfN1; for those who can't run version 10 of the Flash player, Adobe developed a patch for version 9, bringing it up to version 9.0.277.0, and it can be found here: http://adobe.ly/dnSzmP. The update for Acrobat and Acrobat Reader can be found here: http://adobe.ly/O6lDZ .

The updates are available by scrolling down just below the Full Download listing to the appropriate area of the Updates/Programs listing. Once there, select the version from under its heading and click on the link. These patches for Flash, Adobe Acrobat and Acrobat Reader take the place of the normally scheduled July patches.

Mozilla finally released updates to versions 3.5 and 3.6 of Firefox, and it updated Thunderbird as well, but in early June as opposed to nearly the end of the month for Firefox. The latest Firefox versions are

END OF AN ERA ARRIVES FOR XP

(Continued from page 9)

3.5.11 and 3.6.8 and Thunderbird now sits at 3.1.1. However, Firefox went from 3.6.3 to 3.6.6 in a matter of four days, skipping version number 3.6.5 entirely. The thing that made folks most anticipate version 3.6.4 of Firefox is a new feature it has that allows a plugin to crash but not take the browser down with it. This applies only to the Flash Player, QuickTime (from Apple) and Silverlight (from Microsoft) plug-ins for now, but it might involve others in future versions of the browser. Mozilla has no plans to incorporate this feature into the 3.5 series of Firefox, however. As for the security updates, they plugged a variety of holes found in late May and early June in the browser. One in particular involved its JavaScript engine in both versions 3.5 and 3.6. The only significant difference I could find between 3.6.4 and 3.6.6 of Firefox was a statement on the Release Notes page for Firefox 3.6.6 stating that 3.6.6 waits a longer period of time before ending a plug-in that has crashed. Firefox version 3.6.6 was released June 26, but at the end of July, Firefox was quickly updated twice in one week with the release of version 3.6.7 on July 20 and the release of version 3.6.8 on July 23. Version 3.6.7 was regularly scheduled and patched many privately reported bugs, but introduced another critical bug that garnered quite a bit of attention in the security community because of the recent hackers convention during the last week of July. That bug was squashed in version 3.6.8, the current version.

On the Thunderbird side of things, the release at the beginning of June, 3.0.5, had some usability improvements and four security bug fixes in it. Some of those bug fixes were in versions 3.5.10, 3.6.3 and 3.6.4 of Firefox. Thunderbird version 3.1 is focused on new features and usability improvements. It has a new toolbar that lets you sort your messages by search terms, tags, message age, by whether or not it has an attachment, and more. It also boasts faster searching and better handling of passwords, as well as having many preconfigured settings for the most popular e-mail providers, making setup that much easier. The latest version, 3.1.1, fixed the same variety of vulnerabilities that were patched in versions 3.6.7 and 3.5.11 of Firefox.

Microsoft emergency patch

On a final note, on Aug. 2, Microsoft was scheduled to release an out-of-band or emergency patch for a widely publicized vulnerability in the way Windows processes the little files that make up the shortcuts to programs and files that show up on your desktop and in the Start Menu in all versions of Windows currently in use, from Windows 2000 to Windows 7. A variety of attacks have already successfully been carried out, some aimed at computers that control industrial systems in the manufacturing sector.

Many infections have been against systems at small businesses and home users, simply carried out with the use of USB thumb drives left out in the open for folks to pick up and take home or back to their businesses. All that's needed to get infected is to view the USB drives contents with Windows Explorer, the default for Windows. Microsoft developed a workaround, or temporary fix, but it left your desktop with a bunch of white spots where your icons were. Because of the number of folks affected by this bug, including high-profile clients, Microsoft decided to release this patch earlier than the regularly scheduled date for the month of August.

If you have Automatic Updating enabled for Windows, you should have gotten it shortly after 10 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 2. However, this patch is not available to those running Windows 2000 nor to those running Windows XP Service Pack 2, both of which were retired from any and all support for security patches on July 14, 2010.

In fairness to Bob de Violini this article was written last summer so some of the application versions he mentions have been updated since then. The article is excellent and since so many of us still use XP it is right on target.
Thanks Bob.
Bill Aulepp, Publisher

INTERNET TECH ADVICE

INTERNET TECH ADVICE
Managing [and deleting] All
Those Web Browser Toolbars
Sandy Rand
srand98 (at) comcast.net
Brookdale CUGroup, NJ
BUG Bytes, June 2010
www.bcug.com

Did you ever notice that your Internet Explorer has toolbars from such companies as Google, Yahoo, Ask.com, Web- Search, MSN, The Weather Channel, etc? The list of these toolbars goes on and on. When I work on my client's computers, sometimes I see five or six toolbars on the same browser window. The toolbars are actually taking up a third of the space. Most of the time, the client doesn't use them and has no idea how they got there. Once in a great while, I find someone who actually uses one of these bars.

The annoying part of it is that most of the time, they sneak on. These toolbars are mostly marketing. Somebody is getting paid to get you to use them. So, how do they get on your computer? The usual scenario is that you have downloaded a free program and done a Standard   Install. The way to control what's happening is to do a Custom Install. With the Custom Install you step through several screens that give you choices. With free software, most of the time one of these screens will ask for permission to install a toolbar, change your home page or change your default browser. All you have to do is remove the checkmarks or choose no.

Sometimes when downloading programs, you'll get a choice between running the installation from the web site and saving the installation file to your hard drive. You should always choose to save the file and do the install from your PC. Otherwise, you may not have an opportunity to choose the Custom Install. Also, it's good to have the install file just in case you have to run the installation twice.

If you're actually using one of these toolbars, you should still get rid of the ones you don't use. There are two approaches. In Internet Explorer, just right click in the menu area. The menu that comes up will list all toolbars installed on your PC. The active ones will have a checkmark in the menu. Just click on the

check marked item and the toolbar will close. Use this method if you might want to use the bar later.

 If you're sure you'll never use it (which is most of the time), go to Control Panel, Add Remove Programs and uninstall the toolbar program. Its that simple.

There are quite a few free programs that are worthwhile and the software companies can't stay in business if they can't monetize it somehow. The toolbars are one way they do it. Still, for the future, you'll have better control if you always do Custom Installs.

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

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PORTABLE UTILITIES FOR YOUR FLASH DRIVE

PORTABLE UTILITIES FOR YOUR FLASH DRIVE
by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;
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Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX;
Radio &Talk Show Host.

WEBSITES:
http://live.sunbeltsoftware.com

http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/download/portable

http://www.piriform.com/recuva/features/ portable-version

http://www.piriform.com/defraggler/ download/portable

http://www.piriform.com/speccy/ download/portable

http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eek

http://iobit.com/toolbox.html

http://www.superantispyware.com/ portablescanner.html

http://www.liberkey.com

I continue to make extensive use keychain along with my car keys. Just yesterday I was called to a relative's house to rescue a family computer that had been devastated by malware, such that the computer was nearly useless. Using the utilities on my flash drive, I was able to remove some stubborn malware, clean the hard drive, remove useless items from the startup, defragment the hard drive, and return the computer to good health. My relative had complained that the computer had previously been so sluggish that it took several minutes to boot, then another three minutes just for Internet Explorer to load, and that it took so long for web pages to load that he gave up using it. In less than an hour, using those portable utilities, the computer ran like new; my relative was pleasantly surprised when the computer booted up in a few seconds. I asked him to time how long it took for Internet Explorer to load after the fix, and he was shocked to see IE load in about two seconds! Without my flash drive loaded with portable utilities, this would have been a much more difficult and time consuming job.

Yesterday's desperate call for help from a relative was not an uncommon occurrence; just Wednesday, four days ago, another relative called in a panic saying that she had clicked on an apparent legitimate website, and her computer had been instantly hijacked by a type of malware referred to as a rogue antivirus program "Security Suite 2011". This scumware would not allow her to do anything on her computer until she "activated" the extortion-ware by paying a Russian cyber criminal $40 to clean her computer of the hundreds of (false positive) viruses and trojans that it found. Of course the program was a scam which actively loaded other malware on her computer, and took control of it for nefarious purposes, such as sending out spam emails. This malware took over her computer even though she had a top-selling name brand security program on her computer. Within an hour, I had sequentially run three antimalware programs from my flash drive, and her computer was cleaned of malware. T h e s e two calls for urgent assistance are in-line with the norm, as I get about three such calls in a typical week. It w o u l d have been very difficult for me to quickly clean these computers if it had not been for the portable versions of popular free software that I always carry with me on my flash drive.

My 8GB flash drive attached to my keychain has been getting a lot of use lately, mostly on other people's computers. I have been steadily adding and updating software to it, enhancing its potential. One of the recent additions to my flash drive, which I used to remove the malware on the two computers discussed above, is the Sunbelt Software "Vipre Rescue" program, a free portable malware scanner and cleaner available for d o w n l o a d from live.sunbeltsoftware.com. Vipre Rescue is an 81MB executable file which can be downloaded to a flash drive, and then run to clean the target computer. It is the latest updated version that is available for download from the Sunbelt website. When run, the executable will install the software to a selected location, and then run itself in a DOS (command prompt) window. By default, Vipre Rescue will perform a deep scan, looking for all malware, including the otherwise difficult to detect rootkits that can often slip by more conventional security software. While the default is for Vipre to run a deep scan, which may take a substantial amount of time to thoroughly disinfect a computer, the user can

PORTABLE UTILITIES FOR YOUR FLASH DRIVE

(Continued from page 13)

manually select other options from a command line such as "VIPRERescueScanner.exe / quick" which will perform a less thorough but faster quick scan. Using the command line "VIPRERescueScanner.exe / restore" will undo any repairs and restore any quarantine items. Other command line switches allow the user to specify paths to be scanned, and display the logs of prior scans. While I prefer the default deep scan, which is very good at detecting deeply hidden malware, I often select the quick scan from the command line, knowingly sacrificing some potential detection for increased speed. Since I routinely perform multiple scans with different products, I feel reasonably confident that I will detect and neutralize any malware on the computer.

Some of the most frequently used utilities on my flash drive are the freeware portable versions of software published by Piriform, including CCleaner (one of my all-time favorites), Recuva, Speccy, and Defraggler. CCleaner (piriform. com/ccleaner/ d o w n l o a d / portable), in its different versions and builds, is likely the world's most widely used hard drive cleaning software, with over 500 million copies downloaded! The portable version is intended to be installed to a flash drive, where it can be used to clean unnecessary and obsolete files from a hard drive; it is precisely this portable version that I used to clean the hard drives of the above computers. CCleaner will do much more than just clean the hard drive; it will also clean the registry of obsolete data, uninstall   More Portable Utilities Continued from Page 4 unwanted programs, clean the programs in the startup that load at boot (a critical function in enhancing performance), create or restore a

system restore file, and securely wipe deleted files. All of these functions are appropriate to improve computer performance.

I frequently use the portable version of Recuva (piriform.com/recuva/features/ portable-version) to undelete files that had been accidently deleted, or to recover files from discs that had been accidently formatted. Recuva can also be used to recover deleted emails, music files, videos, images, word processing files, and other files that had been deleted, provided that these files had not been overwritten or wiped. While Recuva offers a wizard to guide an inexperienced user in the process to recover files, I choose to directly recover them.

Recuva can recover files from hard drives, flash drives and other flash media, digital cameras, MP3 players, and other devices.

The portable version of Defraggler (pirif o rm. c om/ d e f r a g g l e r / d o w n l o a d / p o r t a b l e) can defragment entire hard drives, or just selected files. When a drive is fragmented, pieces of files are written to widely separated places on the hard drive, which reduces the ability of the hard drive to quickly locate and utilize those files, making the hard drive work hard and slow. Defraggler can defragment the hard drive bringing these separated file pieces together into one orderly file; it is precisely this function that I used on the Internet Explorer installed on the computer mentioned above, which led to an almost instant loading of IE after it was defragmented.

Many people are not aware of Speccy (piriform.com/ speccy/ download/portable), but I use it regularly from my flash drive to determine the specifics of the hardware and software in a computer. With this information I can find updated drivers on the component manufacturer's website, where the latest drivers can be downloaded for installation. Comprehensive information is presented on the operating system, motherboard, RAM, graphics card, hard drive, and other components installed in the computer. This information is often necessary to properly configure, repair, or update components These utilities referenced above accompany the additional utilities on my flash drive, including those that I have written about in the past. These additional utilities include the portable versions of SuperAntispyware (superantispyware.com/ portablescanner.html), LiberKey (liberkey. com) which is a graphical front end for over 300 other included portable utilities, Emsisoft Emergency Kit (www.emsisoft. com/en/software/eek) a powerful antimalware program, and IObit Toolbox (iobit. com/ toolbox.html). With all of these utilities instantly available to me from the convenience of my flash drive, I am reasonably confidant that I can resolve a god number of problems on most PCs that I encounter. With the price of USB flash drives as low as they are today, there is no valid reason why users should not have these utilities available to them just in case they are needed.

FREE ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE PROTECTION

PROTECT YOUR COMPUTER WITH FREE ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE
By Bob Rankin

A technology writer and computer programmer

AskBobRankin.com

Your computer is running slow... your high-speed internet connection feels like dial up, and popups are everywhere. What's wrong? It could be a computer virus, or perhaps a bunch of viruses, infecting your hard drive. Viruses not only take up valuable memory and slow down your computer, they can also expose your personal information to Evil Hackers.
The good news is, there are plenty of anti-virus programs that can clean up the mess and keep you safe going forward. Some of them are even free!
Here's a rundown of the most popular free anti-virus packages. I'll also share my take on on free versus paid anti-virus software. Find out which option is right for you.

Free Anti-Virus Programs
AVG - is one of the most often recommend freeware anti-virus packages. While Grisoft offers a paid version, there is a freeware version of the virus protection on the website. It only offers anti-virus and anti-spyware protection (no anti-spam, anti-rootkit or firewall) but provides very effective protection from the most common threats. The Pro version has Web Shield to screen your downloads, rootkit protection, and free support.

Avast! - another freebie anti-virus program with basic features, and ease of use. It is updated regularly, also highly recommended. The Free Home Edition includes anti-spyware and anti-rootkit detection.

BitDefender - is another highly rated freeware anti-virus tool. Like the others, it offers just basic anti-virus protection, and I recommended that you add anti-spyware protection as well.

Avira Anti-Vir - claims over 30 million users worldwide, and the free Personal Edition gets good reviews. There is a paid version with anti-spyware and firewall protection as well.

ClamWin AntiVirus - is a free open source antivirus program, which means it comes with the programming source code. ClamWin has a high detection rate for viruses and spyware, but does not include a real-time scanner. This means you have to rely on scheduled or manual scans to detect viruses. Normally I view open source software as a Good Thing, but in the case of security software, I wonder if it might help the Bad Guys exploit the defenses. Using it in conjunction with another anti-virus program might be a good strategy.

AOL Internet Security - gives you a comprehensive and free set of Internet safety tools, including anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall to help keep hackers out. Under the covers, this package is McAfee's VirusScan Plus, which is rated high technically, but gets so-so reviews because it tends to use a lot of system resources.

CA Antivirus from Computer Associates (formerly called EZ Anti-Virus) is my personal favorite amongst the freebies antivirus tools. RoadRunner makes this available for free to their customers, but anyone can get a 3-month free trial. I've used this program for several years, and have been very happy with the protection it provides when scanning both emails and downloaded files.

Microsoft Security Essentials is a new free security tool from Microsoft, released in October 2009. It's meant to provide protection not just from viruses, but also spyware, rootkits, and trojans as well.

Sure, there are other free anti-virus programs I could have listed, but these are the most popular and provide the best protection, according to my research. And since I noted that most of the

FREE ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE PROTECTION

programs above do not include spyware protection, let me mention that I recommend the free Windows Defender from Microsoft. Windows Defender protects you from spyware, pop-ups, other security threats. It features real-time protection, so it can warn you if something you're downloading is spyware, and also automatically updates itself with new spyware definitions.

Note that if you're using the new Microsoft Security Essentials, you don't also need Windows Defender, because MSE includes that functionality. But if you have any other antivirus tool, I still recommend that you add spyware protection, and Defender is a good choice.

Some people swear by Spybot Search & Destroy or Lavasoft's AdAware. These are very good free anti-spyware programs as well. But in all the years I've been using Windows Defender, I've tried these other two a few times, and they've never found anything that Defender failed to catch. I'm no Microsoft fan-boy, but I'm sticking with my recommendation that Windows Defender is still the best.

What You Should Know About Anti-Virus Software

Look for virus protection that comes with frequent, automatic updates and covers all viruses, not just the major threats. If you aren't getting regular updates, at least once every two weeks, you should consider another program. New viruses are created every day, so you need constant, up-to-date protection.

You should also not rely on a single anti-malware program if you are going to rely on the freeware solutions. Standalone anti-virus programs are not a replacement for a firewall or anti-spyware protection. You need all three, and my recommendation is that you use a separate program for each task. I strongly recommend that you also read these two articles to understand more about malware protection and firewalls. The first will tell you my recommendations for the FOUR free programs you need to stay safe online, and the second will demystify the subject of firewalls.

Free Internet Protection Software
Do I Need a Firewall?

I do have one caution about using anti-virus and anti-virus packages. Some people assume that because the software is free, then more is better. I've gotten reports from people who are using TEN or TWELVE "anti" programs at the same time. The truth is that anti-virus programs like to be left alone, or they can end up in a "death spiral", each thinking that the other is trying to do something bad. Multiple

anti-virus programs can interfere with each other, causing system slowdowns or lockups. And running multiple anti-spyware tools at once can have the same result. That's why I recommend that you pick ONE of each.

Paid Versus Free Anti-Virus

Do you really need paid anti-virus software? That depends on you. If you or others in your household are prone to visit the dark corners of the Internet (peer-to-peer music/movie downloads, adult sites or warez), or if you have children that will click and download almost ANYTHING, then you will probably want the best protection possible. Generally, the commercial anti-virus packages with monthly subscriptions offer very high levels of protection, fast updates when new viruses are found, and good customer support. You should also consider a paid anti-virus package if you run a business, or if you have sensitive information on your computer. It's a small price to pay to ensure that your data is secure. Here are some highly rated commercial anti-virus packages:

NOD32 Anti-Virus
Avast! Professional
F-Secure Internet Security
McAfee VirusScan
Symantec Norton Anti-Virus

All of these are rated "Advanced" in the latest AV Comparatives report, which is an independent, unbiased testing group. You might also want to read some anti-virus software reviews from PC World. Oh, and if you're wondering why I listed Norton last in that bunch, then good for you. I've had bad experiences with Norton software myself, and have gotten many first-hand reports from others who've had trouble with it. I'm sure it's a good product, but perhaps it just tries too hard. Norton security products are bloated with so many features and options that they really slow some systems down. And they put their dirty little hooks so far into your system that if you ever want to uninstall it, good luck. If you're happy with your Norton security product, then I'm happy for you. But I won't touch or recommend them.

In summary, don't take your Internet security lightly. You really DO need good anti-virus, anti-spyware, and firewall protection. Oh, and there are two other programs I recommend for your anti-malware arsenal. Be sure to read Free Internet Protection Software to see what they are.

Short Circuits...zzzt!

A Bang-up Chance. A Radio Shack in Montana is offering would-be satellite television customers a bit more bang for their buck. Customers who sign up for some Dish Network packages at Radio Shack in Hamilton will be rewarded with a pistol or shotgun. Those not interested in the gun offer can pick a $50 Pizza Hut gift card. The store owner says it took some haggling to get Dish Network to go along with the promotion, but he says it has tripled his business since it started last October. The sign outside the business reads: "Protect yourself with Dish Network. Sign up now, get free gun." The promotion includes a coupon for a gun and the required background check.
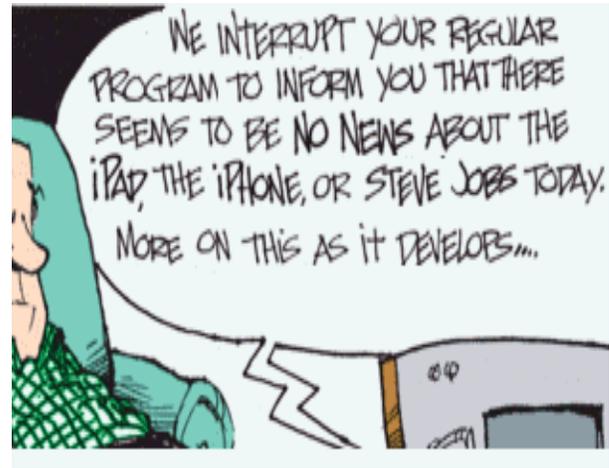*Associated Press* Mar. 26, 2011

Right MO. Wrong ID. Police say someone trying to steal copper wire burned down the Alabama city of Birmingham's 35-foot-tall Christmas tree. Officers say someone stripped electrical wires off the tree about 4 a.m. Wednesday then started a fire. Police believe thieves were attempting to separate the copper wire from the plastic insulation on Christmas decorations. But the fire spread to the tree, engulfing it in flames. The next day Public Works crews used heavy machinery to remove the blackened limbs and trunk, and the dead culprit's body was discovered. It was a squirrel
Associated Press Dec. 15, 2010

"You know your life is dull when your computer password is the most exciting secret you know!"

Nega-tweet. Don't tweet in the church and don't hug the Queen. The guests for the British royal weeding between Prince William and his fiancée Catherine Middleton will be given a booklet of behavior. The first rule: Don't be late. Guests may be asked to leave cell phones outside. "The worst faux pas would be the hear a ring tone, even it was 'God Save the Queen'", a protocol expert warns. Tweeting, cell phone photography, or updating Facebook would also be considered to be in poor taste.
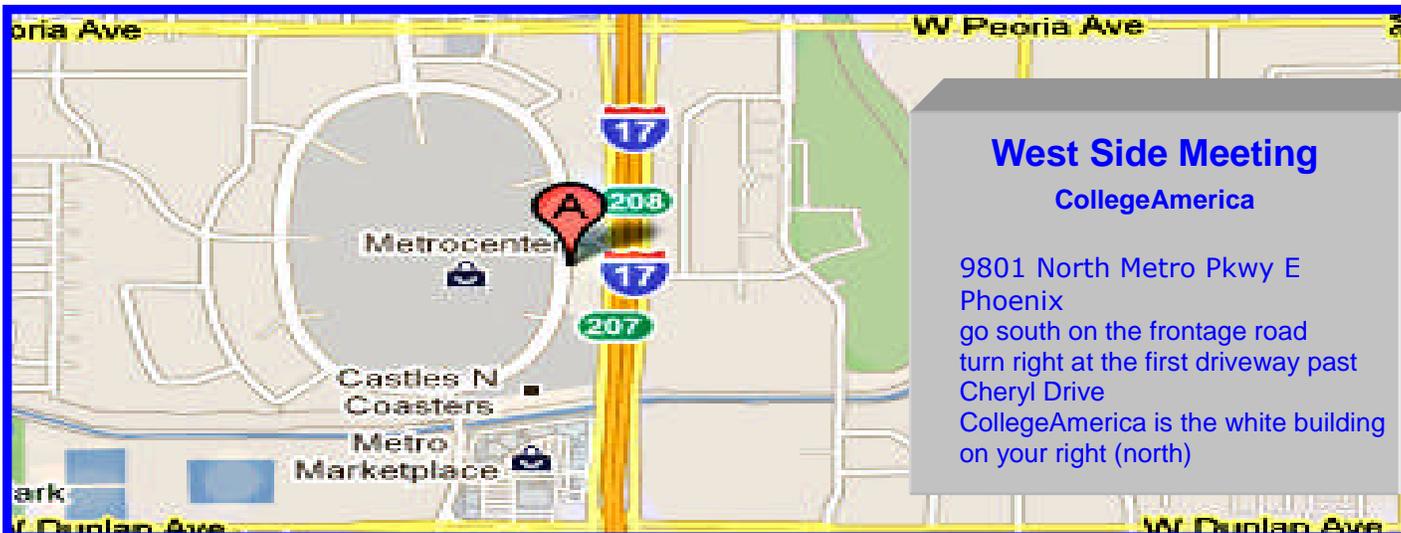*Associated Press*, March 13, 2011

Home to R-2: Phone Home. Astronauts on the International Space Station may soon be getting an android friend. And for the folks back home, it will tweet. Japan's space agency is considering putting a talking humanoid robot on the International Space Station to watch the mission while astronauts are asleep, monitor their health and stress levels and communicate to Earth through the microblogging site Twitter. The NASA project has human-like head, hands and arms and uses the same tools as station crew members. The "Robonaut" called R-2 - a shout-out to R2-D2 of "Star Wars" fame - is intended to carry out maintenance tasks in the station's Destiny lab.
Associated Press Feb. 17, 2011

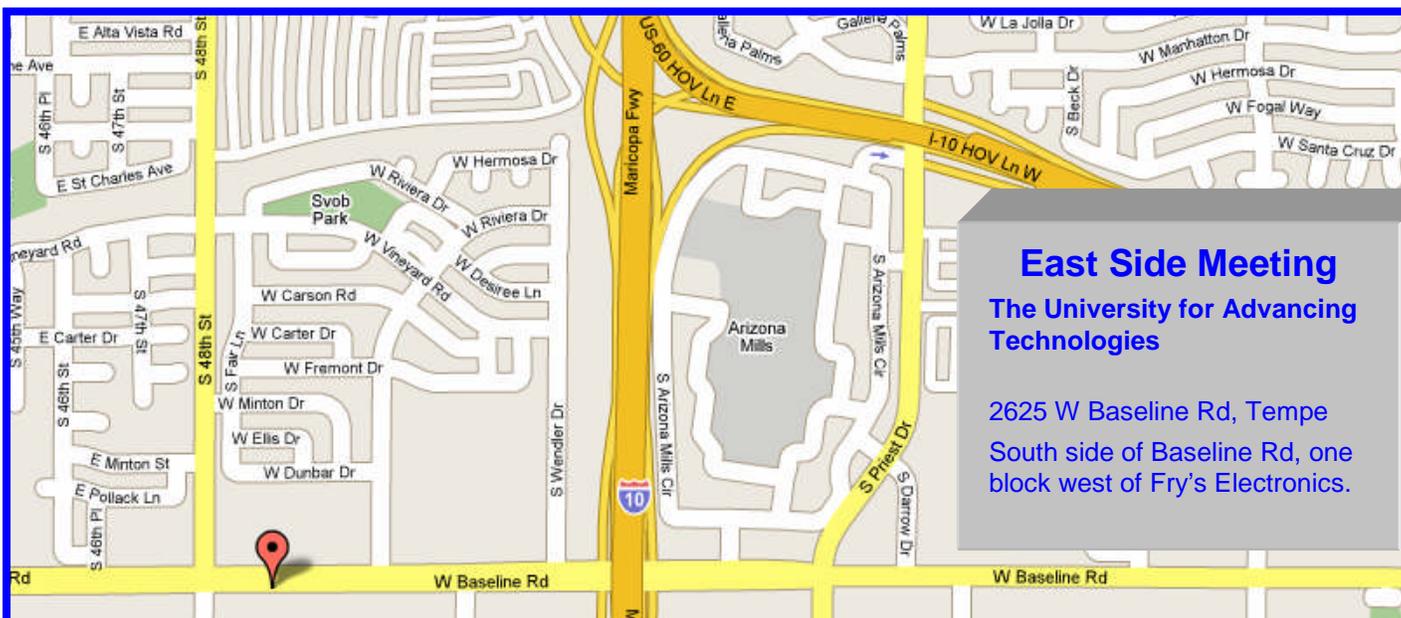*These items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.*

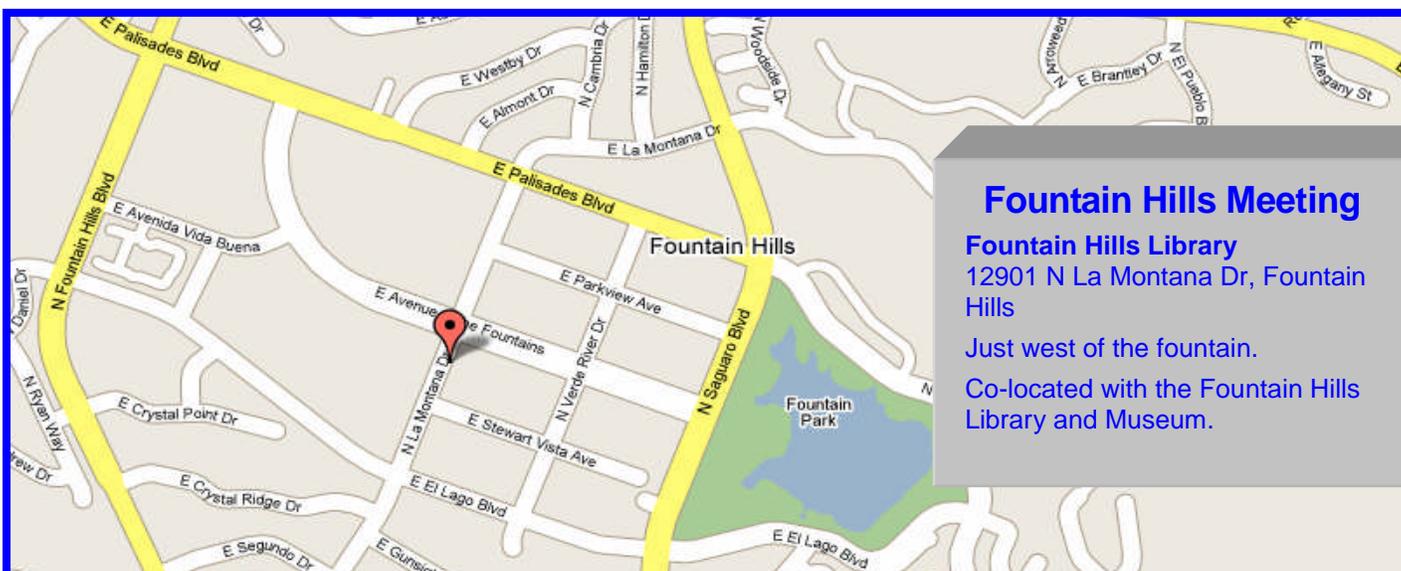# HOW TO GET THERE

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   ☐

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

April 2011

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

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