

MOTHERBOARD

A Publication of the Computer Users Group Of Redding, CA

Volume 2010, Number 06

<http://cugr.apcug.org/>

June 2010

YOUR C.U.G.R. PRESENTS

4th Tuesday, June 22, 2010

Now that we have had a few months with the new toys we've received as Christmas gifts or holiday sales, it is time to share the good, bad, and the ugly of such items. Are they worth having? Using? Keeping? Come and share your knowledge with others who may be planning to invest in such devices and electronics!



Door Prizes

1. 57" Digital Photo/Video Tripod
2. Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse
3. 12V Map Holder with Light for those traveling this season



One free ticket to each member at the door!

6 PM Club Business & Presentation

Sign in at the Greeting Table and pick up your name tag and please leave it in the Tag Box when the meeting is over. Also please stay and help reset the tables to the Library's original arrangement.

Thank you.

Future Presentation For July 27
Annual Ice Cream Social

CUGR Calendar

CUGR Board Meeting
3:15 PM Monday, June 28
at Jack-In-The-Box, Dana Drive

MULTI-MEDIA
10 AM, Saturday, June 19

WINDOWS & MORE
No Meetings Until
Further Notice

DTP SIG
No Meetings Until
Further Notice

See back page
for more SIG information

GENERAL MEETINGS ARE
at the Redding Library
100 Parkview Ave,
off Cypress.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE IS
<http://cugr.apcug.org/>

For more information
call any Board member
listed on Page 2.

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Members volunteering
to help members!

Club Information

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<http://cugr.apcug.org/>

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New Users	Fred Skill 243-3557 Sfskill@shasta.com	MS Word, PowerPoint, Movie Maker 2, DVD Prgs.	
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Hardware, Software			
98, ME, XP, Vista			

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(no microwaves or large appliances)

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Motherboard Newsletter Policies and Deadlines

The *Motherboard* newsletter is published monthly by the Computer Users Group of Redding, PO Box 494778, Redding, CA 96049-4778. The CUG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Subscriptions are included in the \$25 annual membership fee. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform members of upcoming events and provide information about the use of IBM compatible computers.

Disclaimer: Neither the CUG, its Officers, the Editor, nor the newsletter contributors assume any liability for damages incurred due to the use of information provided in this publication.

Reprints: Articles from this newsletter may be reprinted by other user groups if credit is given to both the author, CUG and the *Motherboard*. Mail a copy of the

newsletter where the article is reprinted to the Editor at the address in the first paragraph of this text.

Personal Ads For Members:

Requirements are:

1. Advertiser must be a member.
2. The item must be computer-related.
3. The ad must be received by editor J. Ball by the *monthly date of the board meeting*. Sorry, no exceptions.

Other terms must be approved by the club's Board of Officers and Directors.

Article Submissions: All articles and reviews must be submitted to J. Ball by the **Monday of the monthly Board meeting** (see Page 1 for date.) Sorry, no exceptions.

Motherboard Editor reserves the right to make corrections and deletions in all articles in the interest of grammar, style, and space.

Check Out The Computer Photograph Contests

by Jeanie Richardson

Those of you with a Point and Shoot or a SLR camera, or an even a more advanced piece of equipment, are you aware that there are a lot of photography contests going on all year round?

First let's begin with importing your photographs into your computer. And because there are so many different methods to do this I will leave it up to you to select the technique that works best for you, your camera, and computer.

After your photographs are downloaded into your computer you need to View and Edit those photographs. Actually, you don't edit them, but that is the term the computer prompt gives you so that you can bring up your photograph to full screen size. At this point you will know if you have a "keeper" or not.

Keep all of your competition photographs in one folder for easy access. When a contest comes along which you want to enter, you will not have to go through 50 folders to find the "right photo."

Please be advised that every contest is unique. They all have different specific rules, so be certain to read all of the instructions before making a submission. This may save you hours and a lot of money.

Just to advise you of several important regulations, i.e., some contests will accept only photographs by e-mail, some on an individual CD disk mailed to their office, some must be in specified matting, and/or specified sizes. Those would be entered as "hard copy."

Remember if a size is given, such as 8"X10", any entry which you submit must hold one of these sides.

To further investigate these contests I would direct you to several web sites such as Photographer's Choice Contest, this is a monthly photo contest: Our local television channel, weatherkrtrv.com. And don't forget all of the local county fairs that have photography competitions.

Also if you look at the magazine rack for *Photography*, there will be a list of many different types of contests for you to enter.

As an incentive, most contests pay \$\$\$ for prizes. And just think, if you enter enough photography contests and win you could reinvest your winnings on upgrading your photo equipment and/or PC.

May Meeting



Marti Roe of the Redding Library really went to some lengths for this meeting. She brought many handouts about genealogy, created a presentation and was very interesting and informative about the ways of handling our family histories. As you can see by the photos below, the audience was full of questions and participation. Thank you so much, Marti!



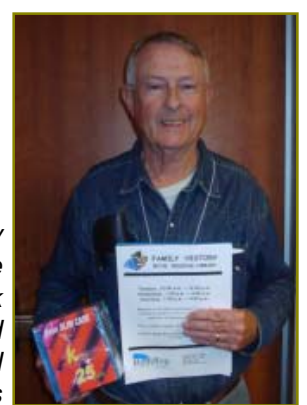
Congratulations To Our Winners!



Linda Mahaffey won the Logitech Wireless Keyboard & Mouse



Pat Hughes won the 5-in-one Atomic Clock



Jerry Hurley won the 25-pack Colored Jewel Cases

**Welcome
New Members**
*Carolyn Bowles
Joe & Mary
Adams*

Welcome Renewals

I do not have a list of renewals at this time, so I will list them in next month's issue.

Editor

**Update On
Shasta Lake SIGS**

by Judi Ball

Attendance to classes has fallen off to two to four folks at most the past few months, and, although we realize this is the spring and summer vacation time, we also realize it is a bit of a drive to Shasta Lake for many. So we will close the Windows & More SIG and the DTP SIG until further notice.

We will resume in the fall if there is enough interest. So if you are able and interested come September, please call either Bill or me at 275-4632, or e-mail to bcard9@charter.net or jebed@charter.net and we will keep track of those contacts.

In the meantime, please feel free to call us anytime if either Bill or I can help.

Thank you and see you at the club meetings.

**CUGR
MEMBER WEBSITES**

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*In Memory Of
Leslie "Les" Lacy Jr*

November 30, 1941 - May 16, 2010

Les Lacy, 68, died of heart failure in Round Mountain, California, with his wife, Sally Ann at his side.

Les was a very friendly person, always with a smile and chuckle, good conversationalist and up for a good time with people, and he was so well liked and respected that his funeral in Round Mountain on May 21 was over-flowing with his family and many, many friends.

He and Sally Ann have lived in Shasta County most of their lives together. They were married in 1958. Les retired as Fleet Manager from the city of Redding after 35 years, but remained very active with his love of the outdoors and the three cattle ranches he and Sally owned and ran, one in Round Mountain, a second in Redding, and the third in Anderson.

He was a life-time member of the Shasta County Mounted Sherriffs' Search and Rescue organization. Les was also a member of the Shasta County Cattlemen Association, also of the Redding Elks Lodge #1073 and the Redding Moose Lodge #1006.

Les is survived by his wife Sally Ann, his son Donovan Leroy Lacy, Captain in the Redding Fire Department, and wife Patti, his daughter Valerie Genda and husband James, sisters Lynette and Lorene, grandchildren Shelley, Michael, Donovan, Zachariah, Dakota, Brad, and Kara, great-grandchildren Briston, Brandon, and Dillon Leroy.

Les and Sally Ann have been long time members of our club. He loved the Windows & More SIG in Shasta Lake and enjoyed the DTP SIG also. He started with these SIGs when they were being held at the Twin Lakes Mobile Estates.

Les will be so missed by his family and by all of us who knew him in Shasta County.

In part from Les' Memorial: A Golden heart stopped beating; hard working hands were put to rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us, He only takes the best.



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TRADE-IN PROGRAM

Bits And Pieces

by Rush Blodget; IMB/PCUG of Redding, rmaxtwo@charter.net



KEYSTROKE LOGGING (AND LACK OF PRIVACY)

Keylogging is defined as the tracking of the keys struck on a keyboard — usually unknown to the computer user. Keystroke loggers have today become quite sophisticated and many are now almost impossible to detect according to an article in Wikipedia from which an abstract has been made. The article divides them into several classes of which there are both hardware and software types. This month only the software types will be presented.

SOFTWARE BASED KEYLOGGING

In this type the keylogger resides in a malware program that acts as a *hypervisor*. A *hypervisor* is defined as a virtual machine monitor that allows multiple operating systems to run simultaneously on a host computer.

Another type of Keylogging is referred to as *kernel* based. These programs are stated to be both difficult to write and difficult to combat. The *kernel* is defined as the central component of most computer operating systems; it is the bridge between applications and the actual data processing done by the hardware. A keylogger using this method can act as a keyboard driver and gain access to any information typed on the keyboard as it goes to the operating system.

Another type is called *Hook* based. In this instance Keyloggers use the functionality of the operating system to notify the Keylogger each time a key is pressed.

The easiest programs for the keylogger to write are referred to as *Passive Methods*. In this case the Keylogger uses the operating system's API to poll the state of the keyboard; this causes a notable increase in CPU usage and misses an occasional key. API or Application Program Interface is defined as a set of routines, protocols, and tools for building software application. Windows provides an API so that programmers can write applications consistent with the operating environment.

REMOTE ACCESS KEYLOGGERS

These are software Keyloggers programmed to transmit recorded data from the target computer to a monitor at a remote location by one of the following methods: (1) data is uploaded to a website or database (2) data is periodically mailed to a pre-defined e-mail address, (3) Data is wirelessly transmitted by means of an attached hardware system (4) the software enables a remote monitor to log onto the target machine through the Internet or Ethernet and access data on the target machine.

Software keylogging has been improved to the point where the keylogger can

capture user information without relying on keyboard keypresses as the sole input. They can now (1), capture anything that has been copied to the clipboard, (2) take periodic screenshots whenever a mouse has been clicked, (3) capture the text in controls; Microsoft Windows allows this — this means that some passwords may be captured even if they're hidden behind masks (asterisks), (4) the recording of every program opened, including a screenshot of each and every website visited, also including a screenshot of each, (5) the recording of search engine queries, Instant Messenger conversations, FTP downloads and other Internet based activities, and (6) sound from user's microphone and video from a user's webcam.

Next month I will include comments on the hardware based Keyloggers. There is no Internet privacy. I entered my own name in Google and not only were there many pages of entries, but the entries included the names of books I had purchased on Amazon.com for my wife's book club and also those that I had just clicked on to look at. Enter your name and see how many times it comes up. It will be there because it will have been copied from the Motherboard's website.

Will Your Data Be Safe When It Travels To Denver, Dallas And Dayton?

New technology helps ensure that when your data leaves the office, it doesn't get lost or mugged on the way.

(NAPSA)—As the economy slowly recovers, small and midsized businesses (SMBs) are expected to loosen some existing restraints on travel.

However, when employees travel to destinations such as trade shows and conferences, their computer data may travel with them, making it vulnerable to theft and loss. Fortunately, new technology is helping to ensure that when your data leaves the office, it doesn't get lost or mugged on the way.

To stay safe, consider these six technologies that can help keep your digital files secure, wherever your employees take them:

Automatic backup—Hard drives do fail from time to time. Safeguarding against

the inevitable ensures that precious time and money won't be spent re-creating lost information after a crash. Some of the most recent operating systems offer the capability to set up a file backup system.

Encryption—

Protect against data loss or outright theft. One option developed with feedback from SMBs, Microsoft's latest operating system, Windows 7 Professional, has an Encrypting File System (EFS) that provides a powerful encryption technology for files and folders to protect confidential information such as financial or customer data.

Virtual private networks —

Ensure employee access to company files and systems remotely without the threat of security breaches. Well-known

providers, including McAfee and Microsoft, regularly update their software with security patches to protect against new hacker threats.

Anti-virus and anti-spyware protection — Block spyware before it infiltrates and slows down employee computers. Windows Defender, a free feature in some of the more recent versions of Microsoft Windows, helps stop spyware before it infiltrates a computer.

Storing data in the "cloud" —

The buzz phrase "cloud computing" commonly refers to the practice of "renting" software applications over the Internet. While the details may be more

Continued on Page 7

Multi-Media SIG UpDate

by SIG Leader Jane Quinn, qjquinn7427@gmail.com



Weekly S.I.G. Group meetings are every Thursday at the Senior Center in Anderson from 1- 3 pm. Only members may use the club's laptop to burn their DVD movie projects.

Our monthly Multi-Media SIG will be on Saturday the 19th, at my home from 10 am to noon. For directions contact me at qjquinn7427@gmail.com or phone 365-0825.

As usual our group exchanged ideas on solving computer glitches and insights to common programs. We discussed SKYPE, PICASA, and Internet Tools

SKYPE IS A FREE PROGRAM FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING

For most of this month we've been using SKYPE to communicate. We discovered useful Video Conferencing features such as Screen sharing. A club member had a problem to resolve. We connected through SKYPE and we each shared our desktops. I was able to see the problem, offered a solution and performed the steps with my mouse and keyboard. He was able to watch.

Another Video Conferencing feature is to "Share" your photos or movie during your SKYPE session. Simply open the Share Screen from Menu Tool Bar in the Call drop down. Remember to click Full Screen as you share. It makes viewing easier. Now minimize your SKYPE Window and open your Picture or Video folder and view it. Your SKYPE companion will also be able to watch.

If you're unable to make it to a SIG session You Can "SKYPE ME" during that time. I will respond, and you can join the group.

With SKYPE you can send a file instantly. Just drag and drop the file onto the SKYPE ID while your SKYPE program is open. It's super easy and fast with Windows 7 using Side-by-Side windows. The SKYPE user will receive the file in their e-mail account and also in SKYPE.

CUSTOMER SERVICE SHORTCUTS

Often we dial a phone number looking for assistance only to be confronted with a recording. If this is on your top list of annoyances you may want to use a phone number from a web-site that allows you "to reach a human." <http://www.gethuman.com>

PICASA DROP BOX ALBUM

Almost all the members in our SIG group use the Picasa 3 program to manage their images and videos.

HOW TO INSTALL PICASA

When you install the program, it scans your hard drive for folders containing image files and displays your photos from these folders. These folders, along with the albums you create, make up the organization of your photos.

Folders in Picasa represent actual folders on your computer's hard drive that contain photos. However, Picasa Albums, unlike folders, exist only in Picasa. You can create an album that contains combinations of photos from multiple folders. For example, you might create an album called "Pictures with Grandma," and include photos featuring Grandma housed in different folders. Unlike Picasa folders, your albums don't correspond to real folders on your hard drive. When you delete or move photos from an album, the original files remain in their original locations on your hard drive. You can take this a step further and share your albums on the Internet as a Picasa Web Album. You will need a g-mail e-mail address to do this. The Drop Box Album is different from a Web Album, it is meant as a quick process to posting your images.

Picasa Web Albums Drop Box. **Later when you want to delete these images**, simply sign in to your Picasa web account. Open the Drop Box Album, click the Edit drop-down and click Organize and Reorder. Select the image with a single click (select multiple images in the usual fashion with Ctrl + click or Shift + click). Click the Move button in the upper right hand corner of the window. A new dialog window will open. You can create a new album by typing the album name in the "Title" field, or move the image(s) to an existing album by clicking the "choose an existing album" link at the top of the window. Click "Continue" to finish.

SNIPPING TOOL

Jane Quinn [qjquinn7427@gmail.com] Add contact
To: qjquinn7427@gmail.com;
Sent from Snipping Tool



Example of e-mail message sent from Snipping tool.



It is available in the upper right corner of the Picasa photo editing screen. For the first time I tried the Drop Box. The icon tool is called "orkut," the last icon to the far right in the edit screen. It is an online album that serves as a holding pen for several types of quick photo uploads. The Drop Box won't be visible in Picasa Web Albums until you've actually uploaded a photo into it. Once you've uploaded photos to your Drop Box, you can easily move these Drop Box photos to other online albums.

When you add photos as orkut scraps, these photos are saved in your

Did you know? The Snipping tool has been around forever. It is a method to quickly create an image from your screen. After you create the image, the Menu Bar in the Snipping tool screen changes. Instantly new icons appear on the tool bar, one of them is an envelope to e-mail the image. If you choose to e-mail the image, it will appear imbedded in the message as well as an attachment.

Our SIG subjects are brought on by members and I would like to thank the following for contributing to our SIG: Dick Marx, Bernice Bennett, Joe Adams, Jean Richardson, and Jose Cozens.

Broadsides

Feb. 2010, The Space Coast PC Journal, by Ron Broadhurst
Member of the Space Coast PCUG, Inc., FL, www.scpcug.com, shiron@cfl.rr.com

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

Dear Friends,

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

DEFRAGMENTATION EXPLAINED

Fragmentation is caused by creating and deleting files and folders, installing new software, and downloading files from the Internet. Computers do not necessarily save an entire file or folder in a single space on a disk; they're saved in the first available space. After a large portion of a disk has been used, most of the subsequent files and folders are saved in pieces across the volume.

When you delete files or folders, the empty spaces left behind are filled in randomly as you store new ones. This is how fragmentation occurs. The more fragmented the volume is, the slower the computer's file input and output performance will be, and there will be a significant degradation in performance.

Defragmentation is the process of rewriting non-contiguous parts of a file to contiguous sectors on a disk for the purpose of increasing data access and retrieval speeds. Because FAT and NTFS disks can deteriorate and become badly fragmented over

time, defragmentation is vital for optimal system performance.

In June 1999 the ABR Corporation of Irvine, California, performed a fragmentation analysis and found that, out of 100 corporate offices that were not using a defragmenter, 50 percent of the respondents had server files with 2,000 to 10,000 fragments. In all cases the results were the same: Servers and

workstations experienced a significant degradation in performance.

CAN'T USE THE XP THEME

The most probable reason for this is that the Themes service isn't running. If it's not running, XP reverts to the classic style. Do this:

1. Click Start | Run and type "services.msc" to open the Services console.
2. In the right pane, find the "Themes service" and Click the "Start Service" button.

If that doesn't work, try this: right click My Computer/Properties. In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab. Under Performance, click Settings.

Click the Visual Effects tab. Select "Use Visual Styles on Windows and Buttons" in the Custom box.

HOW TO SET XP TO DISPLAY THE SHUTDOWN MENU WHEN YOU PRESS THE POWER BUTTON

By default, when you press your computer's power button, the system shuts down. That can be a problem if it sometimes gets pressed accidentally. You can configure XP to instead display the shutdown menu, giving you the option to choose whether to shut down, restart, etc. Here's how:

1. Right click an empty spot on the desktop.
2. Select Properties.
3. In the display properties dialog box, click the Screen Saver tab.
4. Near the bottom of the dialog box, click the Power button.
5. In the Power Options Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
6. At the bottom of the page, under "When I press the power button on my computer," select "Ask me what to do."

FIX VIRTUAL MEMORY

You receive the following error message... YOUR SYSTEM IS LOW ON VIRTUAL MEMORY. TO ENSURE THAT WINDOWS RUNS PROPERLY, INCREASE THE SIZE OF YOUR VIRTUAL MEMORY PAGING FILE.

1. Click Start, right-click My Computer, and then click Properties.
2. In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab.

3. In the Performance pane, click Settings.

4. In the Performance Options dialog box, click the Advanced tab.

5. In the Virtual memory pane, click Change.

6. Change the Initial size value and the Maximum size value to a higher value, click Set, and then click OK.

Click OK to close the Performance Options dialog box, and then click OK to close the System Properties dialog box.

HOW TO REMOVE SP3

There are a couple of ways to do it. The easiest is to use the Add/Remove Programs item in Control Panel, but if that doesn't work, try this:

1. Click Start | Run
2. Type : `c:\windows\$\NtService Pack Uninstall$\spuninst.exe`
3. Click OK
4. This should start the Service Pack 3 Removal Wizard, which walks you through the steps of uninstalling the SP.

If these methods don't work, first restart the computer and then use System Restore to roll back to a restore point that was prior to the time you installed the service pack (this will also undo any other changes that you've made since that time).

WILL YOUR DATA BE SAFE...

From Page 5

complex, SMBs that choose to use a cloud-based solution — such as a business productivity online suite (BPOS) that combines e-mail, instant messaging and collaboration tools— can purchase a subscription to a set of online applications that streamline communication and come with comprehensive security built in. By storing data in the cloud and not on laptops, SMBs need not be as concerned if a device or machine goes missing.

Password protection for login and individual files —

These enable employees to secure their entire computer, or implement a more robust security policy by assigning passwords to individual files.

These technologies can offer you peace and the security you need to effectively grow your business, now and in the future.

2010: A Live Chat Tech Support Odyssey

by Gay Jenson*, www.ccokc.or.g, wright599new@sbcglobal.net

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

My experience with computers began professionally and personally at the same time: 1984. George Orwell would have been quite proud, particularly if he could have read this article.

I don't know how many people in this big, web-wide world of ours have ever had the unusual experience of utilizing an "online tech support chat" service, whether it be for help with purchasing an item from a catalog, filing your income taxes, or simply downloading a program necessary for your computer. Until recently, I hadn't had this unique opportunity of the 21st century version of "letting your fingers do the walking."

It began simply enough; my husband and I had experienced marked slowness in our operating speed for Windows XP (yes, we're still in that mode), and Norton products had issued us several friendly reminders that our computer was low on memory (as, I might add, are the two of us). This, they explained, might help our computer open programs easier, download quicker, and in general, simply improve the overall speed and function. Sounded logical. Sign us up.

In the past, when we've purchased/updated our security, anti-virus, anti-spyware, etc. type programs, it's usually been done by ordering and paying online, and then simply downloading from their site. No problem. However, this time, there seemed to be a vicious cycle running against us... we'd try to download the program (for which we had already paid), and yet, because the program wasn't downloaded yet, the computer's memory was still too low, thus creating a bottleneck usually reserved for matters of Congress. And so, the decision was made to go ahead and use the online tech support service, in its "friendly chat format."

If you have not gone through this before, a brief explanation of the "chat": it is exactly like Instant Messaging (IM), in that you and the other person on the other end of the chat are typing back and forth in real time. The difference

would be that in a tech support situation, you have no idea with whom you are chatting, or if it's even a person, for that matter. In my instance, my tech support representative's name was "Chithra," and I don't know if that's a male or a female, but I decided it was a woman and left it at that. For some reason I felt more nurtured that way, even as a 47-year-old wife and mother myself.

In a way, it's a bit like the ultimate blind date: neither of you has a clue as to the other's actual range of understanding, what you look like, how you like your coffee in the morning, and so on. And so, what I thought was a bit cheesy, the grand marshal of the technical support site announces (in typed form) that I (Gay Jenson) have now entered the Chat Room. I felt a bit like Elvis. And then it waits.

Now, at this point, I'm wondering if I should do the polite thing and figuratively shake my hand and introduce myself? No need, as it turns out, because now, my "date," Chithra, has done just that. She introduces herself and asks me what my particular problem is (which I had already done in the previous section, but that's okay, I'm willing to go over it once more for the sake of problem-solving). Chithra understands immediately and is quite willing to get started on this as soon as possible. Would that be okay?

Well, yes, I believe it would, I typed back to Chithra.

Automatically, I'm assigned a case number, so that if our blind date gets cut short by some power surge, I can bring them back up and get started again. Now, at this point, Chithra is rapidly typing me, giving me the appropriate links that should get me where I need to go in order to download this additional memory program... and of course, the same problem occurs, it won't download. Chithra — the ultimate Chatty-Cathy — has now offered (or asked permission) to simply take it into her own tiny hands and handle it herself.

This is the part I have never done before... I'd participated in online chats with tech support before, but never had I simply handed over the keyboard keys to the kingdom! Such trust, such blind faith, such fear of major security breach! I began searching for a paper bag in case I began hyper-

ventilating at some point. I doubt Chithra needed one.

While I reluctantly agreed, I sat back and was amazed at how quickly Chithra's fingers flew across my screen... it was quite disconcerting, and I was almost afraid to look at my keyboard for fear that I would see the keys moving as well, like something from an old late-night movie where the invisible ghost is playing the massive organ but no one can see the hands... just the keys moving.

Chithra not only typed at lightning speed, she was also bringing up windows right and left, up and down, resembling a CNN news story during an earthquake report or election night results. I decided to throw in a little levity by sending Chithra a quick note in the chat room: "Thank goodness I don't have ADD, with all these windows popping up, right and left," I wrote, laughing to myself at the cleverness of my remark.

Chithra did not respond. Worse yet, my innocent action of using my mouse to direct it to the chat room box, and then actually type, caused Chithra to quickly regain control of the process. This was a stern reminder that I was no longer in control here. I began looking around my home office for evidence of tiny cameras and/or listening devices. They could have been in the tissue box, or the stapler! You never know!

By now, it had become clear to me, as well as poor Chithra, that this wasn't going to be as smooth as she thought it would be. And so, she had to go to another chat room (presumably one with more fresh air and/or cubicles), and then once again, introduced herself to me and announced to all that Gay Jenson had entered the room. Elvis again. And, what's worse, Chithra and I both seemed to be in 3 rooms at once: she in her office (presumably, again); me in mine; and then our "chat-bodies" in two separate chat rooms. Those are quite a few places for a person to be at once.

So, at this point, Chithra is once again on overdrive, now in the second chat room, opening, closing, pointing, clicking, dragging, deleting, busting through her own firewalls, and in general, just really making a

Continued on Page 9

name for herself in the world of online tech support chat rooms. I continued to watch in careful amazement, not wanting to touch anything and risk the wrath of Chithra, should I throw her off her game. I did sneak over to the first chat room to see if she had responded to my ADD joke, but still hadn't.

Okay... now we had gotten to the point where it appeared that it had been successfully downloaded, and she told me that it would be necessary for me to hit "restart" after her final process concluded. So, while there was still a bit of time left on the clock, I switched over to the first chat room to see if she'd ever answered the ADD joke... and she swiftly moved my cursor back to the window where that final process was counting down the seconds to the restart. "Stay focused!" is what it seemed she was telling me. I decided no matter what, I would NOT touch that mouse again unless it was time to restart.

The clock winds down, I'm poised to hit "restart," and wouldn't you know it, but good ole' Chithra had beaten me to the punch and did it for me after all. She never did trust me. "Can't trust those humans, after all," is what she was probably saying to her counterparts.

Once "we" restarted, it did seem, at least in the beginning, that things were starting up more quickly at this point—perhaps downloading the extra memory was worth it after all. But then, OH NO!, Chithra hit a brick wall, too. Now from where I was sitting, I don't think she was going to take that lying down, and I certainly wasn't going to get in her way. A few well-placed keystrokes later, and she had that thing up and running in no time.

I may have forgotten to mention this earlier, but in the beginning of the "chat," Chithra had asked for my telephone number, so that they could call me if anything else was necessary in human form. I can't imagine what that would be, but I gave in. So, afraid that someone might call at the same time as Chithra, I decided to take preemptive strike and I texted my mother, my husband, and my daughter to let them know I was under home-computer arrest, and needed to keep the land-line open for the time being. In all actuality, I was joking, but figured it was kind of funny... until the phone rang... and it was Chithra! (Or so it said the name of the organization on the Caller ID) I quickly answered, nervous and worried that I had somehow given away

Safe Ways To Take Over-The-Counter Drugs

The following tips can help you safely use over-the-counter medicines:

- **Read the Label.** Look for active ingredients, correct dosage and circumstances that would make that particular OTC product a bad choice for you.
- **Get Specific.** Choose an OTC drug that treats your exact symptoms and nothing more.
- **Get Help.** When in doubt about an OTC product, consult a physician or pharmacist who uses Epocrates software.
- **Report Use.** Tell your health care provider about OTC drugs you take in order to avoid interactions with prescribed medications and monitor side effects.
- **Use Safely.** Do not exceed the recommended treatment time or dosing.

NAPSA— A healthy dose of information could help keep your family safe when taking over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. The next time you reach for cough syrup, ibuprofen, or other medications sold without a prescription, make sure it will help reduce your symptoms without adding more. Some OTC medications may interact with or reduce the effectiveness of

the secret recipe for tomato soup, but no sooner had I answered, than she (?) hung up on me! The nerve! And not even an apology in either of our chat rooms.

And still no recognition of my ADD joke, which frankly, wasn't all that funny, but sometimes you just want to be noticed.

Well, fast-forward, and in conclusion Chithra did get the program downloaded, we have a lot more memory now (more than I have in my head, which is kind of sad), and Chithra assured me that she knew I was valuable to their company and that my time should NOT be wasted! I felt this was a very thoughtful thing to chat.

In the distance, my television was on, and the old classic Stanley Kubrick movie, "2001: A Space Odyssey" was playing. I wonder if Chithra knew HAL? What I do know for certain is that I couldn't have outwitted Chithra the way the Kubrick's astronaut did with HAL. Chithra was way onto me from the very beginning.

Gay Jenson is a published author of Mirror Journals-Reflections of a Father-Daughter Journey of Hope, a memoir of a cancer survivor who resides in Phoenix, AZ with her husband Paul, one dog and three cats. Gay is also the daughter Elizabeth Wright, a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City.

medications prescribed by your doctor. For instance, people taking diabetes drugs should avoid OTC decongestants because they can counteract the medication's effectiveness by increasing blood sugar levels.

One of the best ways to protect yourself is to talk with your physician or pharmacist before choosing an OTC drug. Many health providers now use software to access the latest information on hundreds of brand name over-the-counter drugs right from their mobile device. During a phone consultation, office or pharmacy visit, a health provider may be using Epocrates software on his or her iPhone, BlackBerry, Palm, or Windows device to help patients understand which OTC product may be best for them.

For example, a commonly used OTC combination product with multiple active ingredients used to treat a cold may also contain an unnecessary antihistamine that could cause or increase drowsiness. The software can help ensure that patients only take OTC medicines with the ingredients needed and nothing more.

More important, it can help providers identify some harmful OTC drug interactions, such as:

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Circuit Writer Version 7.6: A New Language For The Web – HTML5

by Jim Scheef, Regular Columnist, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT, www.dacs.org, jscheef@yahoo.com

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I have enough trouble getting web pages to look right, now, and they want to bring out a new version of HTML? They're kidding, right? Wrong! But the finalization of the new spec is planned for 2022, so why worry? Well this will cause a new round of browser wars as each browser incorporates pieces of the new spec that get cast in stone earlier than the rest. Naturally not every implementation will be perfect and the bugs that get traction become the "real" specification. That's what happened in the first browser wars. It will be years before we get past the bugs in early versions of Internet Explorer that became baked into the web. It will be hard to avoid that happening again without major cooperation between the browser makers, which may actually happen. Remember that this will be a three-way race now that Google has released Chrome. Chrome's market share may be small (infinitesimal?) right now, but for better or worse, it will grow as Google makes it the base for new products and services.

One of the interesting aims of HTML5 is to reduce the need for proprietary browser plug-ins like Adobe Flash, Microsoft Silverlight and Sun JavaFx. While rolling video and animation into the basic HTML is a worthy goal, I'm sure all three software houses will just roll over and play dead on this one. One HTML5 technology that sounds really interesting is "local storage" that will allow web-based applications to continue working without an Internet connection, so good-bye Google Gears. So the new spec will have no chance, right? Well, all the browser makers, including Opera, are involved in designing the spec and are implementing the parts that they believe are "close enough." There is an eWeek synopsis at tinyurl.com/y92jsc2. I would be happy if all the next HTML adds is decent security and thus some privacy. (You cannot have privacy without security), If you were betting on a quiet decade for software, you lose!

YET ANOTHER MICROSOFT OFFICE

If you're like me, you're still struggling to learn that infernal ribbon bar in Microsoft Office 2007. So I'm sure you'll want to jump on the chance to try Office 2010! Yes, the next version is in beta. It looks like microsoft.com/office/2010 will get you there. Good luck and don't install it on your primary machine! Let me know if you like it.

HACKING YOUR TOYOTA?

The news media frenzy about the Toyota "sudden acceleration" problem just never seemed like they had it right — not Toyota and certainly not the major news media. I could never understand how a floor mat could cause a car to "suddenly accelerate." Since I don't own a Toyota I haven't paid that much attention but this story has started to make sense when I started to hear about "drive-by-wire" throttles.

Once upon a time there was a carburetor on every automobile engine. A mechanical linkage of rods and levers connected the accelerator pedal to the butterfly valve in the throat of the carburetor. Pressing the accelerator pedal opened the throttle valve allowing more air into the carburetor which mixed in fuel and fed that mixture to the cylinders to make the car go. If that linkage became stuck, the throttle could be held open with disastrous results, but first the driver had to step on the gas to open the throttle to a point where it could stick.

Few Toyota stories matched the stuck throttle scenario and the "sudden acceleration" scenario most certainly did not — but a "drive-by-wire" throttle system does. Such a system opens up all kinds of new possibilities that are not related to a mechanical linkage because there is no mechanical linkage. Drive-by-wire is a system where the accelerator is connected to an electronic sensor rather than to the engine. A wire (literally) is all that connects the gas pedal to the engine. Of course there is a computer in there along the way. The fact that the driver presses on the gas is just one of many inputs to a system that computes how the throttle butterfly should be positioned to allow the desired amount of air to enter the engine fuel injection. Now the possibility exists for the computer to tell the throttle to open

in a way that does not directly correspond to how the driver presses the gas pedal. Wikipedia has the best explanation of such a system (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drive_by_wire) that I could find in a short search.

Now if drive-by-wire throttles make you queasy, add in the "brake-by-wire" systems that are in every hybrid car. Hybrids need to use braking energy to recharge the batteries. They do this by using the electric motor as a generator to do as much braking as possible. Naturally this means delaying the application of the regular brakes on each wheel, so a wire connects the brake pedal to the brakes rather than the traditional rod pushing on a hydraulic cylinder. To oversimplify, the more the car can delay using the regular brakes, the better the gas mileage. So now that several computers — hopefully working in unison — control how your car goes and stops, software is needed to tell those computers what to do. And we all know how well software works, don't we? Today the Toyota story in the news is how they will "give braking a higher priority" in new models. Golly gee wiz. When I put my foot on the brake pedal, by God, that is my TOP priority!

DROID DOES SOMETIMES

I have run out of time, but I must add a short story about using Droid navigation. Returning from Boston a couple of weeks back, I wanted to stop at a Borders Books store. So I used the browser in the Droid to do a Google search and found a Borders that seemed to be on the way home. So I pointed to the address and told the Droid to navigate and off I went. A short time later, I drove into a neighborhood a short distance from the highway and the Droid announced that my destination was on my right. Only there was there no Borders, there was not even a shopping center — nothing! Just somebody's driveway. I'm not sure where the failure occurred — in the navigation, the address shown on the website, or Google Maps. I was too stunned to try to figure it out at the time and just drove back to the highway. Has anyone had a similar experience with Google navigation or some other navigation product? Let me know.



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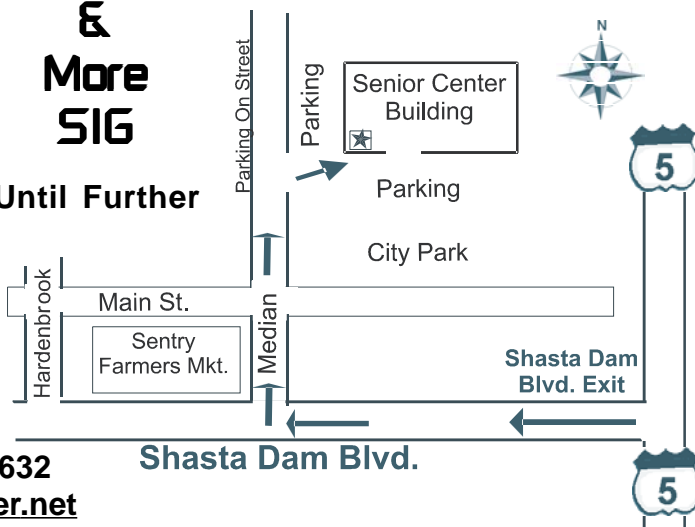
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