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MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

President's Message

Satellite vs. Static

from Mike Kerwin

Well friends, this month's missive is about the adventures of Mary & Mike in satellite radio land. The story starts, as many fairy tales do, long ago and far away. The former part relates to our relatives who purchased new cars with satellite radio capability built-in some years ago. That was neat. They could see on screen the title of the music that was playing and the channel and so much more. They could get the traffic reports for major cities across the country and they didn't have to suffer through so many inane or even aggravating commercials. Word of the first relatives soon spread to another branch of our far-flung family and they adopted the technology as add-on devices, and then another signed on. So the family pressure was building. Certainly all of the hype for the two competing satellite services was there in the background and in a major way at the CES shows we have attended recently.

What finally moved us from thinking to doing was a shake-up in local broadcast radio stations. It seems that my favorite station was owned by a group which also owned an all-talk radio station. As the fickle public interest would have it, and the capitalist idea of maximizing profits, the audience for the talk out weighed the audience for classical music. One day about 6 weeks ago both stations announced on-air that they were essentially switching broadcast bands at 11:00am that same day. For the talk radio this was terrific as they went from AM to FM and gained a tremendous boost in broadcast power – now the signal penetrated buildings. Alas for the classical music the signal strength dropped precipitously – to the point that I could not get a clear signal in my office on the 8th floor of a building in Rockville, just a few blocks from the studio for my

favorite station. Of course, with the nature of electronic data, the actual broadcast tower and the studios do not need to be in close proximity. BUMMER!

I struggled for weeks trying to listen through the static. I tried a second channel for the same station, but it was even weaker. I tried for the Baltimore station playing my favorites and it too was staticky. I moped about. I tried Internet radio but found it too distracting with dead air in place of commercials and trying to remember to use the volume controls on the desktop in place of a mechanical control. Also I have a habit of opening multiple browser windows and some displace currently open windows. What's a true Geek to do when denied access to a desired goal?

Then came the siren song of the CompUSA Moonlight Madness Sale. They were offering an XM radio kit for the incredible price of (drumroll!) \$99 (after rebates). This kit included both stationary and mobile components as well as a "2Go" receiver with internal antenna and 5 hours of recording capacity. All it lacked was a set of external, powered speakers, which CompUSA was happy to supply for about the same price. We went to our local store and searched diligently for the advertised kit, but could not locate it even with the help of a couple of sales reps. Could they have sold out in the first 30 minutes? Finally we located a sales rep who knew the inside story – they were kept in a locked room – and yes they had several left. I sprang for one and Mary waffled. Finally she decided to take the plunge as well.

The hardest part of getting new battery-



Next General Meeting

Robin Abello will discuss ezColumbia.com, an online marketplace for Columbia and surrounding areas. It offers a mini-directory, free classifieds, and more, on an easy-to-use site.

Wednesday, April 19, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

Next Windows SIG Meeting

Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

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powered equipment is waiting for the battery to charge (maybe next month I'll relate my UPS woes). Fortunately, these Tao XM 2Go units only took a couple of hours. A close second in difficulty was opening the package. I believe that Consumer's Reports has a ranking system for packaging and this would probably be near the top of the scale. We resorted to our kitchen scissors – the kind that can cut a copper penny in half. Then we set about signing up for the service, as this is a pre-pay route to the music. We were prepared for this by previous contributions to public radio stations and the price is comparable. I would contribute \$100/year to public radio and the cost of XM is \$120/year with a 3-year commitment, and a money back guarantee. Amazingly, the little receivers started getting signal within a few minutes of our completing the payment online. Next up was to try the external speakers which came with its own antenna and it worked just fine; the remote control works with the receiver unit in all of its connections so that is a nice feature.

I remember when satellite dishes were so large that neighbors complained about the clutter and enterprising Geeks would try to disguise them with beach umbrellas as covers. Then came satellite TV and even the architectural control mavens of Columbia passed on the 18" dishes as not being inharmonious with the strict covenants. Now our XM radios use an antenna about the size of a deck of playing cards for stationary reception and on the car the antenna is about the size of two thumbs placed together. Amazing technology!

XM in the Car

On with the story: Oh yes, we got the stationary stuff to connect and to play, so on to the cars. Mary gave me the worried look she gets every time I take a screwdriver in hand and start to work on, well, just about anything. I started with my Celica, which has a hatchback and a fold down back seat. I first tried the antenna to see if it would stay and found that the magnet inside was so strong that I had to slide it to an edge to grip it to move it to a more convenient place. It STICKS! Then I took my trusty Microsoft screwdriver and started prying the molding panels apart just enough to squeeze the antenna wire in. Around the back seat, down the door frame, over the door sill, and under the front seat – bingo! Now the excess wire is tied off and the connector is placed in the cupholder cradle that also holds the power and line out connections. Since two of our cars have tape players, we use that method to get the signal to the built-in radio without the mess of internal FM transmission (usually not the best approach).

Once my car passed Mary's critical inspection, I took on her Cabrio. First I had to relearn how to lower her back seat to pass the wire through. For that I had to read the car manual to find the release button

in the trunk (it looks like a depressing button to turn a light on/off). For her car I mounted the antenna on the trunk as the convertible lacks a permanent roof (of course). I snaked the wire along the lighting cable, under the back seat molding, down, across, and under to get to the front seat. Then we encountered a difficulty. The cupholders in the Cabrio are nearly useless – too shallow and too close to the dashboard. We tried the stick on adapter, but could not find a convenient, flat surface for the connection. Fortunately the kit included a vent adapter which works fine for horizontal, rectangular vents. I let Mary do the final fitting – if she broke anything I might not end up in the doghouse.

Voila! Now both cars are equipped with cradles and can access XM anywhere the sky can be seen. I must say the kits were comprehensive in the range of parts to make the system work.

XM Results

As to the service: well I am tickled pink that my office now resonates with classical music all day. I have two channels for mostly instrumental music and one for vocal pieces. My office window faces north but the little antenna sits there at a 90° angle and works fine. Mary was not so lucky with her office facing north but on the first floor. She has taken to leaving the device in her car where she has scheduled recording sessions of her favorite radio personality, formerly with NPR, in the morning and bringing it in to listen in the afternoon. The main piece of the system is a tiny computer/radio/MP3 player combined. It can only tune one channel at a time and can only record pre-programmed selections while not otherwise in use. It can essentially pause whatever is playing though and then you can continue when convenient. It has the capacity for presetting 30 channels of the 150+ currently broadcast, but ours are a little tricky to get back to without the remote. In trying to get to a preset the timing of band and number button pressing is tricky; if one is not careful the current channel takes the place of the pre-set channel – a minor annoyance.

The computer aspect of the device was brought home recently (and literally) when Mary arrived home one evening and could not get her tuner unit to turn off. We pushed all of the buttons we could think of and Mary even read the manual (yes, we were desperate!). We eventually found that it has a reset button buried in the battery compartment. As luck would have it though, we could not find a paper clip and we did not have time for me to run upstairs to get my authentic, dedicated emergency CD/DVD opener wire, so I gently pulled the battery free long enough for the display to fade and then restored it. Lo and behold the device did not lose any data. I have to give my admiration to the engineers who put this together as the flat battery comes with a plastic pull tab so I didn't have to break out a screwdriver and increase Mary's





anxiety.

We have been using the service for about a month now and have made good use of it. I tested the battery service length and found it would last over 3 hours. Most of the adapters it plugs into also deliver power so it is only when used alone that the internal battery drains.

The XM service has a special channel for emergency information: # 247, a reference to 24/7 service. The traffic channels also carry the weather and there is one each for DC and Baltimore, though the accuracy is uncertain and they have commercial sponsors. We were stuck in heavy traffic in Baltimore recently and tuned to the XM traffic report; it gave conditions as Green (on the scale of Green-Yellow-Red) and mentioned no tie-ups. Maybe the problem was too short-lived to make it to the broadcasters; we got through with only a 5-10 minute delay. Mary tried the stock ticker service – scrolls on the tuner display – but found her company listed on the “other” exchange and not accessible but still this is a nice feature. It will also do sports scores though we are not big sports fans other than biking, which is not readily reducible to a banner number.

All in all, we have become XM fans. Now I have to buy another car kit and start on the Honda. Here I can use my son’s experience with a similar vehicle though I have to admit to a disappointment in him; he hired Best Buy to install his XM and did not even know how they got the antenna wire to his trunk lid. I called him in Arizona and had him go out to his car to see how they did it and give me advice.

Where did this tinkerer go wrong! I guess that I didn’t pass along that gene. He does recognize it in me though: for Christmas he got me a combination goose neck LED light, laser pointer, and magnet with

a pocket clip – right on Son! This sure comes in handy for working on the backside of my desktop computer in the darkness under my desk.

CMUG Business

On to business: Thanks to Art and Intel for last month’s interesting presentation on how/when to build your own desktop. I found the information interesting and useful. My own DVD burner was not working well so I followed Art’s advice and purchased a replacement double-layer burner for \$30 (after rebate) and popped it into my main machine -- that’s where I got the dedicated wire disk release tool so no more bent paperclips for this Geek.

This month we have had a change in agenda. We had hoped to hear from Vic McGonegal about Computer Seniors of America (www.computerseniors.org), but he can’t make it due to an illness in his family. Instead, our program director Andrew Rein has arranged for Robin Abello to take the April slot. Robin will talk about ezColumbia.com, the new online market place for Columbia and neighboring areas. ezColumbia.com combines a mini-directory, community classifieds and a services directory in a simple, friendly and easy to use site.

I hope to see you there and I may have a special guest as well.

Digitally,

Mike



Upcoming Meetings

Here’s is what we have planned for the next few meetings. To suggest a meeting topic (especially if you can suggest a possible speaker for the topic), please talk to me at the meeting, or via email at cdlots@yahoo.com.

- Andrew Rein

May 17: Andrew Rein & David Johns on converting analog audio to digital (LPs to CDs, for example) using computer or stand-alone techniques.

June 21: Rob Pegoraro, consumer tech columnist for the Washington Post, will explain how he decides what hardware and software makes his column, and what leads to a good review. He’ll also discuss technology journalism, and take questions about his work. Also, Officer Elections!

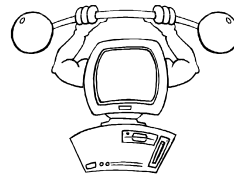
Windows SIG April 27 Meeting

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The SIG focuses on using and maintaining Windows, all platforms. We take questions, present tips and techniques, demonstrate freeware/shareware and even feature some web topics using a little trickery.

If you have a suggestion or a topic for the SIG, please email me at mikes_line@hotmail.com.

Remember that the meetings are now at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at www.millkern.com/cmug for maps and directions.

- Mike Hayes



Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I am a bit more settled this month because I'm on new blood pressure medication and this one seems to be helping, but I was sure worried last month when the BP would intermittently go up in the 190+ range. That is not good and serious things can happen as many of you mentioned. My heartfelt thanks to the readers who were concerned. I even heard from folks I have not communicated with for a few years. I have four months to go yet on the Coumadin so it won't be any walk in the park the way it makes me feel. My cardiologist says I should stay on it for life, but my MD disagrees. I was surprised at how many others take Coumadin and learned things from my readers.

Due to the lack of ambition, as well as time, the column content has changed a bit lately. I am using some announcements sent to most user groups for new products and most officers do not have the time or interest to pass them on to the members. Some friends say I am not doing the readers any favor by passing that "junk" (their words) on since most of it is unfamiliar company names. I am not of that opinion and feel some of those products are interesting, but I seldom find the time to try them even though it would be easy for me to get a review copy. I'd like your opinion so I'll know whether to use them or try finding other things. I only use announcements that offer user group discounts in the column and I'm still on the lookout for other deals. The other announcements are posted on my Web site as I get time to post them.

A Great Weekend With Friends

We enjoyed attending the spring FACUG (www.facug.org) convention. I was told that 149 attendees enjoyed it, down just a bit, and 29 of them were first time attendees. About 44 user groups were represented. As you might have guessed, sponsor support was down, as is the trend. I feel we should stop asking for free meals at these events so sponsors can afford to help us. After a number of conversations with attendees, I am of the opinion that while a few would probably no longer attend if they didn't get the freebies; most still would if the hotel and meal price was kept reasonable. The Tech Session roundtables were always well attended, which gave us a good chance for exposure to some fine products. I was feeling bad at that time, but since it was only an hour drive from my home, I really needed to see my friends. It was well worth the effort.

A Reminder

Gene and Linda Barlow were at the FACUG

convention and Gene did his usual great job. They have long been user group people's best friends and now offer some 18 outstanding products at great prices. They also have bundles that reduce those prices. Check their secure Web site at www.ugr.com. Order code is UGFEB06.

I mentioned to Gene my unorthodox backup plan to put certain files on a flash drive and just copy them to my other machines at times to update certain Eudora and other files, and he told me about a product he offers called **SmartSync Pro 2.10** that will automatically sync designated files to other machines once you put them on the flash drive. He also stresses his personal tech support for the products along with the vendor support, but sometimes you must be patient. He described their new home location in south Utah, and it sounds like a dream spot. He said they got tired of "snow" in northern Utah. Their new home is not far from a wealth of beautiful national parks and it rarely snows in St. George.

Name Your Drive

Have you tried putting a label on a flash drive? Good luck keeping it on! Memorex has introduced TravelDrive ID that has a small LCD screen good for eleven characters to name the drive or its contents, and shows how much memory remains. Go to www.memorex.com and click on Travel Drives. Prices start at \$80. I

only mentioned this product because it is unique.

Automate Your Tasks

Make Any Manual Operation on Your PC A Fun Ride with RoboTask 2.4!

NeoWise Software releases RoboTask 2.4, a Windows-based application that automates routine operations. It now offers new features and enhancements suggested by end users. Set up automations right out of the box without the need to create complex scripts or batch files. RoboTask provides a visual interface and over a hundred actions that can be selected and combined into a task in a point-and-click fashion.

RoboTask has acquired a new plug-in for work with a POP3 server and analysis of email messages, and its actions let you easily organize, for example, a server that will receive commands by email. Also added are "Import Registry" and "Export Registry" actions that expand the backup abilities. Customers will discover new actions to synchronize a task with other tasks and processes called "Wait for File", "Wait for Process."

You can automate file operations like copy, move, rename; manage automatic backups; also schedule and run FTP and Web server operations. These jobs may be launched manually, scheduled to run automatically, or can be configured to be triggered by a wide array of changes in your PC.



Keep Your Email Address Private

by Mike Hayes

Those of you who have been around awhile will remember the Goddess of the Airwaves, Kim Komando. Before legal issues, her weekly columns were reproduced in many user group newsletters across the US. Today I still subscribe to her newsletters and even introduced my wife to this wonderful service; see more at www.komando.com.

One of the really neat bits of information she passes along to subscribers is the "Site of the Day." Kim features some random site that catches her fancy. The site's purpose can be anything, from serious sites for research to a frivolous site to waste away hours of your time. She has linked to NASA space photographs, government research, jokes and games, news, shopping, travel, contests and free stuff sites. Parental guidance should be applied here where necessary. Some of the sites she has recommended indeed provide the subject she featured, but you may find that a site

may also have material elsewhere on the site not appropriate for all.

A recent "Site of the Day" featured a free service that converts your email address into a bitmapped graphic. You may wonder why you would want to create such a graphic and how you would use it. The simple answer is to prevent SPAM. The bad guys do everything they can to get email addresses. They can sell these lists for big bucks. They've written code that will scour web pages, discussion forums, chat rooms etc. gathering email addresses and return them to list providers.

After I reviewed this site my first thought was, "What a great way for someone to harvest valid email addresses!" I mean, think of all the email addresses that would be typed in! So I looked around to investigate their privacy policy. Reading it put my mind at ease.

Privacy Policy

No e-mail address entered into this site will ever be made available to any 3rd party,



Read more about RoboTask at www.robotask.com/forum.

RoboTask 2.4 runs under Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003 and costs \$99.95 for a single-user license. NeoWise will provide a 25% discount to user group members at www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=75129&pc=7043J (3.26 MB download). Registered customers are entitled to free upgrades to minor versions, considerable discounts on upgrades to major versions, and priority technical support.

Thumbnails

I received the following announcement offering a discount. However, I haven't received any response to my email asking how to get the discount. This is the fourth vendor who did not respond and I am at my deadline. Perhaps you'll have better luck than I did if you like the product. (Announcement has been edited for length.)

NeoWise Software

NeoWise Software has released version 1.8 of Express Thumbnail Creator (ETC), a web photo album creation tool for Microsoft Windows. ETC lets anyone, regardless of their knowledge of HTML or CSS, create a compelling, high impact gallery for sharing digital memories with other people over the Internet. The ETC's wizard-style interface takes you through all the stages of gallery creation in a step-by-step fashion and gives a total control over its every detail. Use default settings or choose from 30 exclusive pre-built templates to help you jumpstart your project in a couple of minutes.

Simply follow the five steps of gallery building, adding images, selecting and applying a style to your gallery, specifying the look for thumbnails and full-size images. Customize the size

of tables on index pages, set titles, colors, links, and captions used on index and image pages and you can generate and save the gallery project in HTML format. It is then ready for publication online and can be immediately uploaded to your website.

ETC Pricing and Availability

Express Thumbnail Creator 1.8 runs under Windows 98/Me/NT4/2000/XP and costs \$39.95 for a single-user license. Registered customers are entitled to free upgrades to minor versions, considerable discounts on upgrades to major versions, and priority technical support. User group members receive a 25% discount by emailing Alexey Surkis (alexey@neowise.com). Additional information on the product, a set of sample albums, as well as a 30-day fully functional evaluation version of ETC is available from www.neowise.com/etc. [Note from Bob: No privacy statement on the Web site, so be careful.]

For more information, visit www.neowise.com. Direct download link: www.neowise.com/ftp/etc_setup.exe (4.1 MB).

That's It for This Month

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check for new announcement pages on my website (www.dealsguy.com). This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

- Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
bobclick@mindspring.com





nor will it be used by ourselves for any purpose other than for the generation of e-mail icons.

For your security, the icon links are encrypted to prevent the determination of the e-mail address from the icon's URL. This should prevent spammers from finding your e-mail address as a result of using an e-mail icon on your site.

Whilst we will not e-mail you with any advertising, we may on very rare occasions send out e-mails to alert you of major changes to the service that may require you to change the link you use on your sites to display the e-mail icon."

So, if you still have faith in mankind, using this free service should not get you on spammers lists. Note too the site has advertising which hopefully pays their bills.

So I played with it generating graphics for several of my email addresses. Here is the one for my Hotmail account (that's white letters on a blue background, with the MS butterfly):



and a Yahoo (red letters on white):



As you can (hopefully) see, the graphic tries to use the format of the provider with color and style. The graphic reproduced here in the newsletter may not appear clear and sharp but the actual graphic is. The process is easy as you only need to enter the first part of your address, e.g. "mikes_line", as they have a pull-down to provide the URL and extension. They have 24 URLs available that cover the major players such as Yahoo, Comcast, GMail, and EarthLink.

Once you've created the graphic, you can save it and use it wherever you find it useful. (Nexodyne asks you to link back to their site if you use it on a webpage.) They also assign you a URL which you can use in places you can't paste a graphics file.

Reading the FAQ page provides additional information including how to use the graphic on a Web page or in forums. It also warns you not to simply use the MailTo-type link as that can be farmed.

The URL for all this fun is <http://services.nexodyne.com/email/>.



AMD's Visionary Gamble

by Jim Hinwood, via APCUG

We computer enthusiasts have been the spectators in what I like to think of as a grand race. Leaving all the David and Goliath analogies aside, I like to think of the computer revolution like a car race. Different technologies race around the track — if one pulls a little too wide on a turn, it falls behind, only to make it up on the straightaway later. One "spinout" and you can be permanently out of the race.

There have been some grand reversals in this past year, quite unlike what I've seen in any other business. Quick and decisive changes leading to *huge* differences in market share. When I first started to play with computer hardware, **Intel** was king. For 35 years **AMD** (Advanced Micro Devices) was the "Beta" to Intel's "VHS": a lot of people would only buy computers with Intel chips even though in many ways AMD was the better value. The problem that Intel ran into was the buildup of heat, and the gamble by AMD on the 64-bit processor. Intel ran their chips as close to 4 GHz as they could, but they couldn't seem to crack the 4 GHz ceiling. A lot of gamers did, by going to water cooling, but nobody in the mainstream wanted to deal with water cooling.

Then, multimedia computers came in as the next best thing. With **Microsoft** wanting to make headway into your living room, they came out with a new operating system, **XP Media Center**. Now we had an operating system strictly for a media center PC in your living room, but without a solution to the heat problem, we had water cooling, or a computer with a CPU fan that sounded like a leaf blower. You don't want to watch a movie when the computer running all of your media devices sounds like someone starting a two-cylinder motorcycle!

The other problem is obvious — you don't want laptops that will scorch the gonads off anybody foolish enough to use it on their lap (and eventually you won't be calling it a "laptop" anymore)! Intel found a solution in the

Pentium M for the laptop, reducing clock speeds and heat, and increasing battery life. AMD focused on 64-bit computing. When AMD presented 64-bit architecture, there weren't going to be any applications to really take advantage of 64-bit computing for a long time and no operating system in sight, but the AMD chips had immediate and substantial gains in performance for gamers and they started to trounce the Intel chips in any performance face-off.

Also, clock speed doesn't remain as important when you have a 64-bit pipeline. Instead of continuing to





increase clock speeds, 64-bit computing doubles the amount of data that can be processed per clock cycle. 64-bit architecture also means exponential amounts of memory that can be addressed. The best home computers can address 4 GB of RAM if the motherboard can handle it, but with 64-bit computing you can run 1 terabyte (1,000 GB of RAM). RAM is very fast and this adds substantial gains to the whole package. AMD then went to a true dual core processor, which put two chip cores on the same die, the equivalent of two microprocessors in one. Then you need fewer clock cycles to process the same information — speed can remain the same with double the processing power and running 250 times the RAM.

With the addition of dual core processors and the expected increases in performance that come from splitting the processing of information between chips, AMD has again raised performance without increases in heat. These three things: 64-bit architecture, larger amounts of RAM, and splitting the processing between dual lower-clock-cycle cores have, for the moment, catapulted AMD from a distant second to an over 50 percent market share in personal computers. AMD is in first place for the first time in their 35-year history.

Does this mean the end for Intel? Not anytime soon, with Intel being seven times as large as AMD and with 34 billion dollars in revenue. Intel earns in 11 days what AMD will earn all year. Intel also sits on 14 billion dollars in cash, to AMD's 1.1 billion. This gives them a huge advantage in research and development and in building state-of-the-art production facilities. AMD's surge in market share is due as much to the stumbling of Intel as it is to its own genius. The only thing that seems to be holding AMD back is the refusal of **Dell** to use AMD chips. If consumer demand becomes great enough for AMD chips and Dell makes a reversal, it could mean huge gains for AMD. It remains to be seen if Intel can soon regain the summit on which it once stood firmly!

[Coming next month: Part 2 - "ATI vs Nvidia"]

This article comes to us via APGUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. This article originally appeared in the MBUG-PC Newsletter, published by the Monterey Bay User's Group (www.mbug.org). The author, Jim Hinwood, can be reached at ehinwood@msn.com. The illustration is by Regina Doyle, who is also an MBUG-PC member.

Editor's Note

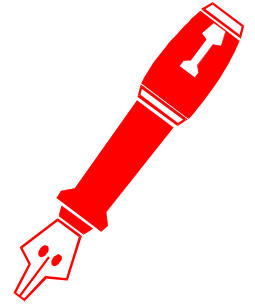
from Paul Van Bloem

I see I have a little space still in the newsletter. It's only eight pages this month, I'm afraid, because I've been very busy at work. (Yes, it turns out that fixing the Social Security system is taking me longer than I expected.)

Let me briefly note two items, and then you can return to your Spring Cleaning (or Easter Candy munching, or other seasonal event).

Woot

Art Silverglate mentioned **Woot.com** at the last meeting. If you're the kind of person who checks out the bargain bin at Best Buy or CompUSA, you should definitely visit. As Art said, they sell only one item at a time, and post a new one at midnight Central Time (that's 1 am for us). However, early-to-bedders should not despair. Frequently, items are still available first thing in the morning. I sometimes check before I leave for work (around 8 am), or even when I get to my office (9ish), and frequently they are not yet sold out.



Granted, the really cool stuff goes quickly. I've seen items that sold out in 20 minutes, or even less. But don't let that stop you from visiting occasionally.

Vintage Computer Show

The other item I wanted to mention is a Vintage Computer Show up in New Jersey in a few weeks, on May 13th. It's at what sounds like a computer museum in Wall, New Jersey, which is near the Jersey shore. It's quite a hike from here, but it might be a good excuse to get away for the weekend. Google says the trip is around 180 miles from Columbia (about 80 miles up I-95, then about 65 on the NJ Turnpike, and 35 east to Wall).

There will be speakers on early computers, exhibitors showing off their classic computers, and vendors. But only computers (and video games) more than 10 years old, and equipment and peripherals suitable for them, will be displayed. The admission fee is \$10 (or \$7 for 13 and under), and parking is free.

The show is sponsored by MARCH (Mid-Atlantic Retro Computing Hobbyists); their website is at www.marchclub.org. The show will be at the InfoAge Center, which has a website at www.infoage.org. The show website is at www.vintage.org/2006/east/, and includes lodging information.

If you do decide to go, I'm sure many CMUGgers would like to hear about your experience. Conveniently, the May CMUG meeting is just a few days after that weekend.

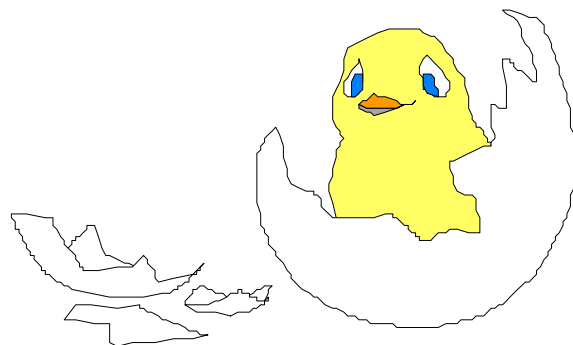
Hope I'll see you at the CMUG meeting, which involves a much shorter drive, at least.



CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin
8652 Open Meadow Way
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:
Wednesday, April 19, 7:30 pm
Robin Abello will be telling us about
ezColumbia.com, a new website for
Columbia and the surrounding area.



CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

Membership and Change of Address

Send renewals and address changes to:
George Coffin
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Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),
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General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$25 (cheap!). Membership includes a monthly subscription to the CMUG Megaphone, a membership directory, full access privileges to the Website, and drawings for free and review software at meetings.

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