

February 2007



Vol. 26,  
Number 2

# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

I haven't heard from President Mike. Possibly the snow got him, or maybe Valentine's Day has felled him. But he's certainly earned a month off, so we'll muddle through without a President's Message.

Let's see if I can entertain you for a brief while. I don't have an overarching theme, but I have lots of little items I'd like to pass along.

## Survey

First, let me remind you about CMUG's survey. The questions were printed in last month's newsletter. You can also find them on the website ([www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)), and there will be extra paper copies at the meeting. Please email me your answers, or mark up a paper form and mail it to me, or give it to me at the meeting.

I haven't received many replies yet. When I have a reasonable number, I'll write up the answers in The Megaphone for everyone to read.

## Big Little Memory Card

I was in BJ's a few weeks ago, and saw they had a pretty good deal on an SD memory card. As most of you know, these cards are about the same size as a large postage stamp, say 1 by 1.25 inches, and about 1/16 of an inch thick. Anyway, BJ's had 1 GB SD cards for \$15, so I picked one up. My digital camera uses them, and I thought it would be helpful to have an extra.

What I thought was pretty funny was that the SD card is not much bigger than an inch square, but the packaging was 9.5 by 15 inches! Obviously they want to prevent people from stealing these small items (and not too long ago, this 1 GB card was a \$60+ item), but I thought the contrast was pretty funny.

Now that I think about it, there was a time when I was using data storage cartridges almost as large as that packaging. Remember the early 10 MB Bernoulli

cartridges from Iomega? They weren't solid state, but rather had a disk inside them. As I recall, the 10 MB Bernoullis were about 8 x 10 inches, and cost \$75 to \$100. They were a big improvement over 360k floppy disks, and were only a little slower than the full-height 10 MB hard drives back then.

Of course, the SD cards are far from the last word in big storage in a small space. The miniSD cards, for example, are about half the size of SD (about 3/4 x 3/4 inch). I think we're rapidly approaching the point where it's way too easy to lose your memory!

On the topic of SD cards, let me mention that I have a handy gadget called a "USB 2.0 card reader." Basically, it's about the size of a flash drive; you can plug a memory card into one end, and the other end into a USB port, and so read the memory card as if it was a flash drive. Very handy for copying pictures from your camera to a computer that doesn't have an SD card reader. Also, they effectively convert a spare SD card into a flash drive. (It's supposed to work with other memroy card formats, but I've only tried it with SD cards.) I spent around \$15 for mine last year, but I see they're \$9 or \$10 at Tiger Direct, now.

## Websites Worth Visiting Article

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll see a short article I wrote about the Jajah website. I hope you'll find it informative, and also instructive. I really want to encourage more newsletter



### Next General Meeting

Our own Art Silverglate will present on Picasa, a free program from Google that helps you manage and edit your digital photos (and other graphic files).

Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Continuation of "Web Resources for You and Your PC"

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

### Inside the Megaphone

Editor's Note.....	<i>from Paul Van Bloem</i> .....	Page 1
Deals from the DealsGuy.....	<i>by Bob Click</i> .....	3
Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed.....		3
Skype.....	<i>by Sandy Berger, via APCUG</i> .....	5
The Most Popular Internet Calling Service		
USB Devices.....	<i>by Dave Gerber, via APCUG</i> .....	6
How Windows Handles Them		
Websites Worth Visiting.....	<i>from Paul Van Bloem</i> .....	7
Jajah: Internet Phone Calls without a PC (Mostly)		



contributions from CMUG members, and I hope you'll consider the Jajah article a model.

We all have favorite websites (one of the questions on the survey asks about this). But there are millions of websites, and thousands of ones worth visiting. If you've found one that you think other CMUG members would find useful or entertaining or otherwise attractive, maybe you could write a few paragraphs about that site.

Of course, I know that if you write an article, it's for the betterment of mankind and is an entirely altruistic effort. So I will only diffidently mention that writing an article gets your name in the hat for our next gift card drawing. The gift card is your fellow CMUG members' way of thanking you for taking the time to write an article; don't let the potential for impugning your motives prevent you from writing!

### Google Personalized

I haven't had time to explore it much, but I see that Google is now offering personalized homepages. When you go the Google site, it checks your machine for a cookie, and then displays blocks with the information you've specified. I think this connects to my Gmail account, but as I say I haven't had time to play with it.

Basically, you choose "stuff" that you want to show up on your homepage. Choices include highlights from CNN.com or Washingtonpost.com, or weather, or Gmail, or Bible quote of the day, etc. Also a to-do list, bookmarks, Sudoku and crossword puzzles, and lots more. What really impressed me is that you can drag these items around (the design is three columns) however you want, and then Google will remember that layout. You can also set up multiple tabs for your homepage.

Hey, this would be a good topic for an article! (hint hint)

### New Dollar Coin

This isn't exactly computer-related, but I thought some of you might be interested in the news about the new George Washington dollar coin. The US Mint is issuing dollar coins with the picture of each President on the front, at the rate of four Presidents a year. The Washington one was officially released on February 15th, in time for President's Day (aka Washington's Birthday) on Monday. The Mint's website has pictures of the first four coins (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, for those of you who don't remember early American history).

The dollar coins are the same size as and use the same gold-colored alloy of the Sacagawea dollar coins. One change is that they moved the "E Pluribus Unum," the "In God We Trust," and the issue date to

the edge of the coin.

You can read more at [www.usmint.gov/mint\\_programs/\\$1coin/index.cfm](http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/$1coin/index.cfm).

### CMUG Business

Let me briefly cover some CMUG business topics.

First, our thanks to Amy Karlson, who came up from the University of Maryland to talk about her research on the human-mobile device interface. Most of her research deals with one-handed use of things like cell phones, and she showed some interesting software attempts to allow users to work more efficiently using, for example, only one thumb to zip through choices. Let me note, considering all the Microsoft-bashing we do, that part of Amy's research was funded by Microsoft. So it's not true that Bill Gates spends all our money trying to squeeze more bugs into Windows.

This month, Art Silverglate will be talking about digital pictures. His focus is on Google's (free!) Picasa program, which helps you manage and edit your digital photos.

### Snow Reminder

Since we've just recovered from a snow storm, let me remind you that we will not have a meeting if the Howard County schools are closed, or close early, on the meeting day. This is primarily because the Senior Centers follow the schools, so the Bain Center would be closed in those cases.

If you're uncertain, check our website ([www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)), which has a link to SchoolsOut.com that shows whether the Howard County schools are open. (We'll also try to get an announcement up on the website.)

### Help Wanted

And finally, CMUG still needs someone to handle meeting programs. Andrew Rein has done a good job over the years with contacting (and following up!) possible speakers. He has now stepped down as Program Director, but I'm sure he'd be glad to pass along his accumulated knowledge to someone willing to take on the program tasks. Part of the job is contacting possible speakers (usually by email). You also need to follow-up, pass along information about CMUG, and then help the speaker find the meeting.

Remember that CMUG is a volunteer group, and we can only continue if we have enough volunteers to support our activities.

I look forward to seeing you next Wednesday.

Editorially,

Paul



## Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheap skate) Click

### Changing Doctors, or Not

A neighbor told me about his urologist who, he said, used the latest laser equipment, and had been written up in the newspaper as using very advanced procedures. I decided the best might not be too good for me, so since I am having urinary problems, I would try him. I went for my appointment and in came a Nurse Practitioner to examine me. (You all know how I feel about that.) While she asked her questions and did the preliminary work, I told her how I felt about the use of NPs substituting for doctors and that I felt I should always be actually diagnosed by the doctor. In so many words, she assured me she was just as capable as any doctor, and that she often offered suggestions that helped the doctors there. Maybe! However, she assured me I would definitely see the doctor, which turned out to be about 15 seconds when he stuck his head in the door and greeted me.

Needless to say, I didn't make another appointment, no matter how good he was. My old urologist might not have the latest equipment, but he is the one who actually examines me. I feel he is capable so I'm going to stick with him. I have since seen him and he assured me he also has the same laser equipment. I am not comfortable being examined by a "substitute doctor" who has nowhere near the training an actual doctor goes through making important decisions concerning my health.

### Interesting Items

Here are two items I found interesting in Information Week. Read about invisible RFID ink for cattle that also won't contaminate anything:

### Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed

As was announced previously, Andrew Rein is stepping down from his job as Program Director. So CMUG is in need of someone who can coordinate presentations for our general meetings.

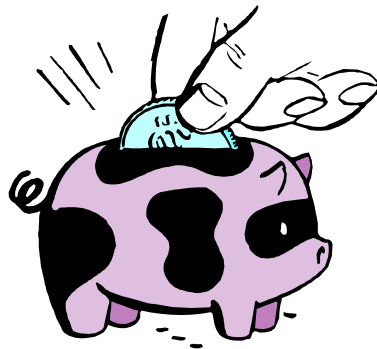
If you have questions about the workload or are otherwise interested, you might speak with Andrew (or one of the other officers) at the meeting.

Meanwhile, here's what we have planned for the next few meetings:

**March 21:** CMUG member **George Coffin**, who recently retired from the Internal Revenue Service, will speak on "Secrets of the IRS Website."

**April 18:** To be determined.

[www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196802844](http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196802844). Also a robot called "iRobot Create" that you can send to the kitchen if you are thirsty: [www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196801858](http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196801858). Or go right to the product's site: [www.iRobot.com](http://www.iRobot.com). They have other robots that you have probably heard about, such as the Roomba robot vacuum cleaner.



### Reminders

The reminder about a free version of Tax Act for doing your taxes is never very timely, but perhaps it's because of how early I must write this column and the fact that I'm not even doing my taxes yet. The site is [www.taxact.com](http://www.taxact.com). You can even file your tax

return electronically now with the free version.

If you don't feel comfortable doing your federal income tax on your own computer, and you make \$39,000 or less, you can call for an appointment with an IRS volunteer who will meet face-to-face with you to do it. Call 1-800-829-1040 to find the nearest IRS volunteer office.

Don't forget the free income tax help from the great folks at AARP. Call the AARP chapter near you to see where they offer this help, and the



### Windows SIG February 27: Part II of Web Resources for You and Your PC

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the fourth 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.

This month I'll be continuing last month's exploration of Web resources to make your PC better, and you better prepared to use it. I've also got some good shareware to show off.

If you have a suggestion or a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email me at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com).

Remember that the meetings are at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org) for maps and directions.

Hope to see you there.

- Mike Hayes



times they are available.

## User Group Discounts

The two items below are announcements that include a user group discount. I have edited them, but they are mostly in the vendor's own words so check further on their websites for complete information. I have not tried any of the products myself although I was invited to do so. They both sound very useful.

### Clipboard Recorder

#### Manage Your Clipboard History

One version is FREE and a nice discount on the other.

LW-WORKS Software has released Version 4.0 of Clipboard Recorder, an application that helps users manage their Windows clipboard history and provides easy ways for users to access their saved clipboard data. Once it's running, Clipboard Recorder adds an icon to your system tray and monitors your system clipboard. As you copy any data from other applications to the system clipboard, Clipboard Recorder will capture it and store it to the listening clipboard record list in a compressed format.

Clipboard Recorder provides four ways to select the records; Popup Window, Floating Window, Menu Window and Main Window. Most of the time, you don't need to leave your working application to access your clipboard history! The selected clipboard records can be pasted to your working application directly just as if you have pressed "Ctrl + V". Clipboard Recorder also features transferring clipboard data between computers. Therefore, users can do "Ctrl + C" on one computer and "Ctrl + V" on another.

Clipboard Recorder is available in two versions, Professional and Standard (Freeware). The professional version with complete online help costs \$29.95 (user group members get a 30% discount using the coupon code "Special"). Clipboard Recorder 4.0 runs under Windows 98/ME, Windows 2000, or XP Home and Professional. Visit the LW-WORKS Software home page at [www.lw-works.com](http://www.lw-works.com) to order Clipboard Recorder or to download a fully functional trial copy.

*[Ed. Note: I visited the LW\_Works website. There's a table showing which features are included in the free version vs. the professional one. Primarily, the free version will not save clipboards, or transfer to another PC. Also, you can download the Pro version and try it for 30 days; if you don't register, it downgrades itself to the free version.]*

### MP3 Sorter

#### Here Is Help to Sort Your MP3 Files

This handy utility will sort a musical collection of any size, quickly reorganizing folders and renaming files on your hard drive. MP3 Sorter physically rearranges music on your hard drive while similar

programs just create a list of files, but make no actual changes. After you use MP3 Sorter, all changes will be seen in Explorer as if you arranged files manually. Prior to actually rearranging files, MP3 Sorter allows users to see the structure of files and folders after renaming/rearranging takes place. MP3 Sorter renames files according to the artist's name and the title of the track and places them in folders like this: "Artists\Album + Year". The utility has an adjustable renaming system.

MP3 Sorter has a preview window showing the newly arranged structure and comes with a Duplicate Checker that insures against accidental overwrites. You can see the transfer result to avoid any transfer mistake, and if you want to undo the transfer operation, it is possible to return the original file and folder structure with the help of the Roll Back Manager. Also, you can make MP3 Sorter delete source files, which will be done only if copying was successful. MP3 Sorter provides an advanced editor so you can change custom tokens whenever you like. After MP3 Sorter neatly reorganizes your MP3 collection, you will be able to find required music tracks on your hard drive with the speed of a radio DJ.

MP3 Sorter runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$24.95 (USD) for a single-user license, but users group members get a 10% discount by using this URL: <https://secure.shareit.com/shareit/cart.html?PRODUCT%5B300080839%5D=1&COUPON1=MP3ST891>. Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on MP3 Sorter, as well as a free trial copy is available from [www.prograce.com](http://www.prograce.com).



Product page link: [www.prograce.com/index.php?page=mp3](http://www.prograce.com/index.php?page=mp3)

Download link: [www.prograce.com/download/MP3SorterInstall.exe](http://www.prograce.com/download/MP3SorterInstall.exe)

### The Bundle Is Back!

Colleen Toumayan from Diskeeper Corp. tells me the "Bundle" is back. It consists of one Diskeeper Home Edition, and one Undelete 5 Home Edition for just \$49.95. Most of you already know the good qualities of Diskeeper products. Get it here: <http://purchase.diskeeper.com/checkout/addtocart.aspx?Item=2140>. I'm glad Colleen stayed with the company (she had considered leaving Diskeeper) because she keeps me apprised of special offers and is a great resource.

### Interesting Software That's Free

I saw this in Mug Monitor, the newsletter for Macon Users Group



# Skype

## The Most Popular Internet Calling Service

by Sandy Berger, via APCUG

If you have an Internet-connected computer and you are still paying the telephone company for long distance calls, it may be time for you to try free calling over the Internet.

Other than the Internet connection you already have, there is very little initial cost and no ongoing costs. Right now you can call anyone for free. This is an offer you really should investigate.

Although there are several online services that you can use for Internet calling, the most popular one and the one I'll talk about today is called Skype. In order to use Skype you need an Internet-connected computer running Windows XP or Windows 2000 or an Apple computer running Mac OS X v10.3.9 Panther or newer. Your computer must also have a built-in or external speakers and a microphone. That is where your small initial cost may come in. While most computers, even laptops, have speakers, many do not have microphones. So you may have to purchase a microphone. Just pick up one from a local electronic store. You can get them as cheap as \$10 or \$15.

Then all you have to do is download the free software at the Skype website at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com), and you are ready to make your calls. If you want to call someone who also owns an Internet-connected computer, you can have them add a microphone and download the software. Then you will be able to call computer-to-computer. It is just like talking on the telephone except that you click on their name in the

Skype software to call them, they hear their computer "ring", and they click on the "answer" button that pops up on their screen when you call.

You can also use Skype to call regular telephone and cell phone numbers. For \$30 per year, you can make unlimited calls to phones in the United States and Canada. You can also make international calls for a per minute fee (generally around 2 cents per minute).

Using Skype to call a regular phone number is pretty simple. You enter the phone number you want to call, click on the green telephone icon and your



computer will call your friend's telephone number. They answer the phone as usual and you can talk for as long as you like.

Up until this past January 1st, Skype had a special promotion, and all calls to US and Canada were free. Now you need an annual subscription, but \$30 per year is only \$2.50 per month.


In any case, calls from computer-to-computer are always free. While sometimes there are small glitches and skips in the calls from computer-to-telephone, my experience has been really great with computer-to-computer calls. Some international calls have a slight echo, but I can live with that for the price.

I save a ton on long distance calls to my daughter in Sweden, and my mom in Missouri. I also save on intra-state charges to my son in Eastern Carolina. You will need a broadband Internet connection to get really good Skype calls. If you are still on dial-up, free Skype calling may be just the financial incentive you need to make the move to broadband.

The Skype software is an easy download, and it is easy to use. Skype is constantly improving their service. Last year they added video calling. If both you and the person you are calling add a web cam to your computer you can both see and hear them. (An added benefit is that most web cams also have built-in microphones.) Skype also has conference calling so the whole family can get in on the same conversation. For those of you who like talking into a handset, now you can even purchase telephones to connect to your computer for Skype calling.

With Skype, you can call any other Skype computer for free; I think it's safe to say that the price won't go any lower! So, get downloading!

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Sandy Berger runs the Compu-KISS website ([www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com)) as well as working as a computer consultant and writer. She can be reached at [sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com).*

 ([www.maconusersgroup.org](http://www.maconusersgroup.org)) and wondered if it would interest any of my readers. It is called Google Sketchup 6. It is a FREE 3D modeling software that helps you in remodeling or landscaping. It has to do with Google Earth. I can't fully explain it so check it out at <http://sketchup.google.com>. It is a great deal because if you want their Pro version, it will cost you a cool \$495. I don't know what that one has that the free one does not, but you can read up on it.

### That's It for This Month

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. I have some new product announcements on my website. 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. Visit my website at [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com).

- Bob (The Cheap skate) Click

[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)

# USB Devices

## How Windows Handles Them

by Dave Gerber, via APCUG

One subject that often comes up is how Windows handles USB (Universal Serial Bus) devices and what you can do when USB devices don't work as you expect. First, let's talk about the two versions of USB that you'll probably encounter:

**USB 1.1:** these were the first widely-available devices and usually ran at a speed of 1.5 mb/sec. They were meant to replace old-fashioned serial and parallel (printer) connections that ran at only a fraction of the speed and could connect only one device at a time. While this speed was OK for slow devices like mice and keyboards, it wasn't useful for transferring large amounts of data, such as from digital video cameras. For faster speeds, you needed SCSI or FireWire (IEEE 1394) connections. Since these were used mostly on the Mac, you often needed an add-in card for your computer to use them, which is one of the inconveniences that USB was supposed to alleviate.

**USB 2.0:** typically runs at the much higher speed of 480 mb/sec, which is faster than the original FireWire standard and much faster than SCSI. This is more appropriate for large data transfer, such as to external hard drives, and necessary to connect CD or DVD burners. However, some people still prefer FireWire for devices like video cameras, because FireWire is really a network that allows devices to be more interactive.

So how do you know which USB you have? If your computer was made sometime in the last few years, chances are its USB ports are version 2.0, which are backwards-compatible with 1.1 devices. One way you can tell which version your computer has is to look at the Device Manager in Windows XP:

- ↳ Press Windows Key + Break to open Device Manager (or click the Start button, then right-click My Computer and select Properties).
- ↳ Click the Hardware tab, then click Device Manager.
- ↳ At the bottom of the list, click the plus sign next to Universal Serial Bus controllers.

If your computer is equipped with USB 1.1, you'll see a device or two called a Host Controller or Open Host Controller.

If your computer is equipped with USB 2.0, you'll see a device or two called an Enhanced Host Controller or USB 2.0 Controller.

Any USB device you buy will have the regular USB trident logo and any high-speed USB device will have the red, white and blue high-speed logo.

If you connect a high-speed USB device to a low-speed USB port on your computer, Windows will probably give you a message that the device can run faster if you connect it to a high-speed port. A USB 2.0

internal expansion card costs about \$20 and a USB 2.0 notebook adapter (fits in the PC Card slot) costs about \$40.

## USB Problems

The most common problem people have is when they connect a USB flash drive (sometimes called a thumb drive) to a computer and the computer doesn't recognize it.

First, let me say that these are great devices. Connect one to your computer and it works like a removable hard drive.

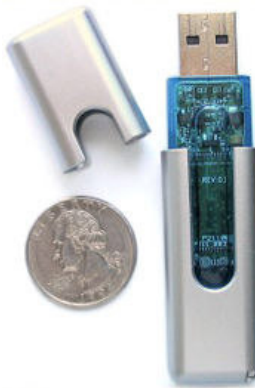
When you connect a USB device to a computer running Windows XP, the computer will detect it immediately. When that device is a USB drive, you'll probably see a message on the

taskbar that Windows detected a new device, followed by a dialog box that asks if you want to open the drive to see its contents, play a movie and other choices. Windows will also assign a drive letter to the device. But sometimes you won't get this dialog box, and when you open My Computer manually (Windows Key + E), you won't see the device listed. That means there's a drive letter conflict.

Here's how you fix it:

- ↳ Select Start/Control Panel, then double-click Administrative Tools. (You may also have Administrative Tools directly on the Start menu.)
- ↳ Double-click Computer Management.
- ↳ On the left side of the Computer Management console, select Disk Management.
- ↳ On the right side, you should see a device listed as a removable drive, probably with the same letter as another drive you're already using.
- ↳ Right-click the white bar where it shows the letter, then select Change Drive Letter and Paths.
- ↳ Select the letter, then click the Change button.
- ↳ Pick a letter not already in use from the list, then click OK.
- ↳ Click OK on the warning message, then click OK again. (I assign U: to all USB flash drives, since I never use more than one flash drive at a time.)
- ↳ Close the Computer Management console. When you go back into My Computer, you should see the USB drive with the new letter.

Another common problem is running out of ports. When USB started being implemented, the idea was that you would daisy-chain the devices together. That is, each device would allow other devices to plug into it, a little like Christmas tree lights. So computer manufacturers would put in only two ports (always in the back) and only one port on laptops. For a variety of reasons, the daisy-



# Websites Worth Visiting

## Jajah: Internet Phone Calls without a PC (Mostly)

from Paul Van Bloem

[Ed. Note: I'd like to encourage CMUG members to write articles for *The Megaphone*, even short ones like this *Websites Worth Visiting* one. You could write a short article like this, couldn't you? Of course you could!]

Elsewhere in this issue is an article about Skype, a service that lets your computer "telephone" another computer, anywhere in the world, and talk for free. You can also use Skype and your computer to call telephones for a small fee (or subscription). But maybe, like me, you tend to associate "telephoning" with, y'know, actual telephones? That's a bit trickier.

To the rescue: [www.jajah.com](http://www.jajah.com) lets you telephone anywhere in the world, and has quite low rates. In essence, you use your computer to set up the call, and then Jajah calls first your telephone, then the



number you want to talk to.

### How Cheap?

Well, all calls in Jajah's "Region 1" are free if you're calling another active Jajah user. Otherwise, the cost is 2.8 cents per minute. Region 1 includes the US and Canada, China, Hong Kong, and Thailand. The same rates apply to landlines in Region 2, which includes much of Europe, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, and a few other assorted places. (Calling a cell phone costs more.)

To be an active Jajah member, you have to have used the service (even for a free call) in the last 14 days. For example, I use Jajah to call a friend in Columbia, because it's long distance from Sykesville. To keep getting free calls, I have to call him at least every two weeks, and he has to call me (or otherwise use Jajah) every two weeks.

Jajah recently added some restrictions to the free calling; there's now a limit of 30 minutes free per day, and 500 minutes free per month. (The call is disconnected when your time is up.) So, although the free calls are nice, you should probably figure on 2.8 cents per minute, which is still much better than most Verizon deals.

Check out the Jajah website for prices to other countries.

### How Does It Work?

In practice, Jajah is very easy to use. Go to their website, and they recognize you and take you to your account page, which includes your address book. You can enter a phone number to call, or choose one from your address book. Then just click the Call button, and your phone will ring. Pick it up, and you hear a recorded voice saying, "Please hold. Jajah is connecting your call." Then the number you're calling rings, and when the other person picks up, you can speak normally.

Unlike Skype and other Internet phone services, you're not using your computer or your Internet connection to support the call. However, I think it would be hard to use Jajah with dial-up service, because they call you right after you click the Call button. (If you had two phone lines, I think there'd be no problem.)

### Conclusion

I haven't made any overseas calls with Jajah, so I can't comment on the quality of foreign calls. The domestic calls I've made have sounded as good as a normal phone call.

I encourage you to check out the [www.jajah.com](http://www.jajah.com), especially if you make overseas phone calls. Their rates are comparable to the best calling cards, and it's much easier to use them from your home (or office) than most alternatives.



chain idea never caught on, and computers made today typically have four ports in the back and two in the front, for quick access.

If you run out of ports, you can fix the problem -- as with so many others -- by applying cash. Buy an external USB hub for anywhere from \$10 to \$40, depending on size, number of ports and power. A hub will split a single USB port into several more. The better ones have their own power supply, so your devices don't have to rely on the computer for powering the USB connection. When there isn't enough power to go around for all the devices, they can go offline.

This brings me to the last problem I'll mention: USB devices going offline because of reasons unrelated to power shortage. This was fairly common when you had many devices connected using USB 1.1 in versions of Windows older than 2000, where the devices had to supply their own software to get USB to work. (Native USB drivers were first included with 2000, then made more robust in XP — and Vista, presumably). If this happens, simply unplug all the USB devices, then plug them back in one-by-one. If any are daisy-chained together, connect the parent devices before connecting the child devices.

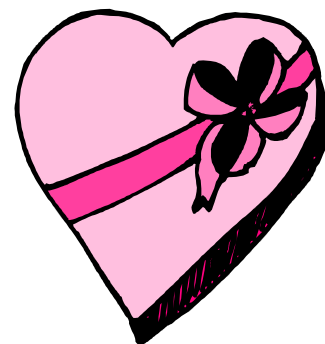
*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Dave Gerber is the Program Chair for the Sarasota PCUG ([www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)) in Florida. He is also a member of the "Live on the Internet" Bits and Bytes radio show team (see [www.bitsandbytesradio.com](http://www.bitsandbytesradio.com)). He can be reached at [Dave\\_bytes\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:Dave_bytes(at)comcast.net).*



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:  
**Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 pm**  
Art Silverglate on Picasa, Google's  
free photo manager/editor.



## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

### Membership and Change of Address

Send renewals and address changes to:  
George Coffin  
CMUG Membership  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045  
gcoffin3@comcast.net

### Reviews

Send review software, hardware, books,  
and info to:  
CMUG Reviews  
Att: Art Silverglate  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
art.silverglate@gmail.com

### Editorial Copy

Send articles, letters, ad copy, questions,  
and comments to:  
CMUG Megaphone  
Att: Paul Van Bloem  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
pjvanbloem@aol.com

Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),  
RTF, or Word.

### CMUG Officers and Contacts

President.....Mike Kerwin.....410-531-1822..kerwinm@dea.nci.nih.gov  
Vice President.....Mike Hayes.....410-465-1131....mikes\_line@hotmail.com  
Secretary.....Mary Guarnieri...410-531-1822...watermelon@comcast.net  
Treasurer.....John Weske.....301-774-7564.....jsweske@juno.com  
Asst Treasurer.....Bill Baxter.....410-531-2820.....billbaxter@erols.com  
Membership.....George Coffin.....410-750-6914.....gcoffin3@comcast.net  
Reviews.....Art Silverglate....410-750-2435..art.silverglate@gmail.com  
Programs.....Andrew Rein.....240-473-4299.....cdlots@yahoo.com  
Publicity.....Jack Fogarty.....301-774-0331.....jfogarty@bcpl.net  
Megaphone Editor...Paul Van Bloem..410-549-3070.....pjvanbloem@aol.com  
Board Member.....Sumi Kinoshita..301-549-3174.....skinoshita@juno.com

The CMUG Megaphone is the official newsletter of the Central Maryland Users Group (CMUG). Articles are copyright © 2007 by their respective authors, except where noted, and all rights are reserved. For reprint permission, please contact the editor.

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 \$30 (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.

[www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)

