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# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## President's Message

### A is for Apple, I is for iPhone

from Mike Kerwin

This month's column is sponsored by the letters A and I. As you are probably aware early July saw the release of three major events and only two of them were related to Harry Potter (7 July for the last book and 11 July for the next movie in the sequence). The remaining summer blockbuster is the long anticipated release of the Apple iPhone (11 July). [Ed. note: Mike isn't up on the latest dates, I see. Book release of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows has been moved to July 21st.]

For a diehard (also an early July release date) Apple aficionado or a true-blue gadgeteer, this was a long anticipated event, with folks spending the previous night camped out in front of Apple stores and ATT Wireless stores. So A is also for ATT, and therein lies a story to tickle the cockles of any Geek's heart. Some of the truly devoted tried to make a quick profit from being first in line to purchase this "must-have" gizmo, but, alas, this was not a case of limited supply to meet a huge demand but a huge supply meeting all current demands. You may have read about some of the eBay sellers trying to auction off iPhones but many had to withdraw their offerings due to a dearth of buyers. One I read about on CNN had to humbly return his extra purchase to the store to avoid overdrawing his bank account; his original plan was to finance his initial purchase by selling the extra for twice what he paid – watch out for blisters on those fingers.

So what is so great about an iPhone (and not so great)? First this is an Apple-designed product which carries a certain cachet like jewelry from Tiffany's. Second it packages a lot of digital functions in a cool case – cellphone, 2 megapixel digital camera, MP3 player, WiFi access, PDA features... well you get the picture. It's the penultimate "All-in-one" geek device which might eliminate Batman-like "tool belts" full of

individual devices. In truth it is very "cool" and "slick" in some of its tricks like a touchscreen keyboard, its ability to auto-rotate the images displayed, and much more.

Then there is the "not so great" side of the iPhone. One of the main complaints revolves around the exclusive two year marketing arrangement with ATT (aka Cingular) and the two year commitment to their service. Users have complained that the Internet connectivity offered by ATT is slower than that from Sprint or Verizon. Also ATT has a bad reputation for national coverage for cellphones which can cause dropped calls for travelers. Another potential drawback is the battery; Apple has a bad reputation for battery life and replacement on new devices. This unit appears to have a relatively short usage time to recharge, which may wear the battery out before the two-year cellphone contract is over. Battery replacement is only offered directly by Apple and the process wipes out all data stored on the phone (hopefully iTunes has a way to back-up all of the data and not just the music files). Also the unit must be "activated" via iTunes and ATT.

So why did Apple choose ATT? One suggestion is that ATT is the only major carrier in the US to use the GSM approach to digital voice messaging (Sprint and Verizon use CDMA). While I can't explain the differences, I do know that GSM predominates in the rest of the world so it is logical that Apple was looking at a world rather than merely US market to sell its unit. Still the public likes



### Next General Meeting

Ms. Kacey Fisher of Fisher Theatrical will discuss how computers are used to control live events (sound, lights, etc), and also how her firm uses CAD software in designing theaters and sets.

Wednesday, July 18, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Making Your PC Work for You

Tuesday, July 24, 7:00 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Inside the Megaphone

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choices and not monopolies so there is some grumbling among the fans.

This grumbling has inspired the “Hackers” among us to do the sort of thing I do with any new computer – they popped the top to see what makes the iPhone tick. This has led to some stock market price rises for the suppliers of the internal parts whom Apple cajoled into remaining silent about. You can read about these stakeholders in news articles plastered all over the Internet.

Others were not satisfied with looking at the hardware and pried their way into the software as well. If you Google “iPhone hacks” be prepared for a long list of references (and some inventive spellings). Among those stellar (or infamous) folks tackling this new project was one Jon Lech Johansen of DCCS fame (allows DVDs to be played on computers beyond the regional security codes) aka DVD Jon. This youngster claims to have found a way to activate the iPhone for several of its main functions though not yet for connecting to other cellphone services. The community



refers to the ATT connection as a “Lock” which they are competing to break (the US Supreme Court has ruled that breaking such locks is not illegal). Probably by the time you read this they will have achieved their goal though I’m not sure it will help much in the US as GSM requires different hardware than CDMA and ATT stands apart with its digital system. To use the phone with another system might require an internal hardware mod, which would surely void the warranty.

And so the struggle continues like a soap opera for Geeks. First something new comes along all neat and tidily bundled to make mega bucks for some entrepreneur. In the second

act, the underground cavalry arrives to release the restrictions in their quest to make the world over into a Geek nirvana, where information and devices are free of fences and other such restrictions. The play is never-ending, and I get a kick out of watching from the sidelines.

### CMUG Business

Well, enough of my musings on events of the day. We held our annual elections last month; I and the other newly elected officers thank you for your unanimous support for another year. We do enjoy what we do, but we would be happier with more appreciative fans. If you have friends or neighbors who share your digital interests, please invite them to our meetings so they can learn and possibly join our merry band.

Our scheduled speaker, Youlong Yang, was unable to appear as he was stuck in the hospital for some hart tests. We all hope his tests went well, and have tentatively rescheduled his presentation on his photos of China and how he uses Photoshop for the August meeting. Our thanks to Art Silvergate for filling in with another interesting presentation on digital photography. And thanks to Mike Hayes for his tribute to Mr. Wizard, Don Herbert (who died Jnue 12 at the age of 89).

For this month, Kacey Fisher (daughter of George Coffin) of Fisher Theatrical will be our speaker. She will discuss how computers control live entertainment, including how they can be used to control lights, sound, and other effects.

Lights! Camera! Action!

See you on 18 July,

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## Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed

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

The presentations are an important part of the educational mission of our user group. The Program Director acts as a central coordinator, and as liason between the group and the speaker. So, this is an important job. On the other hand, I don’t think it’s particularly time-consuming; we only have 11 presentations a year, after all, and most of the communication can be done via email. 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.

**August 15:** We have tentatively Mr. Youlong Yang. He will show us some of his pictures of China, and discuss how he uses Photoshop to work with them.

**September 19:** To be determined

**October 17:** To be determined

**November 21:** To be determined

# Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

## Email Address Change

I've had my fill of Earthlink as an ISP. Talking to techs with bad English is frustrating, not to mention ongoing email problems. The final decision came when Bell South accidentally disconnected my phone. After it was reconnected, I had no DSL service. The Earthlink tech I spoke to had me unplugging and plugging wires, and finally asked me to unplug the very line I was talking on from the wall plug (I asked if she was sure before I did it), and she never called me back. Also, their price was too high. I finally decided on AT&T, who offered the best deal I could find; I still have to rely on techs speaking bad English, though.

My new email address is bobclick at bellsouth dot net. (I hope that strange formatting will avoid address spiders). Already I ran into poor tech support. I was three days late getting my DSL up and running because their own network had problems, and their tech support was slow getting someone to the house for further troubleshooting. They do not enter the house without a charge, but will check up to the outside box. She called the office for DSL light and I was finally in business.

## Help for the Sight Impaired

I saw this article in ComputerWorld about the efforts of the city of Stockholm to provide voice instructions for guiding the blind, or people with poor vision, to wherever they want to go without other help. It is a serious undertaking and sounds promising. See it here: [www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=291724](http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=291724).

## What about the Centralizing of Medical Records?

I'm sure you've read about the desire for a centralized database of medical records for every individual so doctors can have quick access to your complete records. This interesting article talks about some of the efforts [www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=199702199](http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=199702199).

Yet, that has not even come close to fruition so far. Everybody has a different approach including the many companies trying to develop products to accomplish it. Then there's the HIPAA law, along with other concerns about confidentiality, and your medical records. I worked in a UAW retiree office for two years helping retired members with benefit problems. Most were trying to get medical bills paid. Calling insurance

companies and medical centers was an exercise in frustration after the HIPAA law took effect. You had to hope for a friendly person who would try to work around that law to solve the problem, even after telephone permission from the subscriber. The office person on the other end couldn't actually see us both sitting there and often refused to help.

When I ran the Medistick product a few months ago (a USB Flash Drive to contain your personal medical information in PDF format for doctors to access), I thought that was a good idea, but now I'm not so sure. Different doctors use different software and office procedures, and they all want to keep office costs down. When I tried a new cardiologist last year I mentioned various doctors I had seen in the last few years. He wanted to contact them all for my records to do his homework. On my next visit, he had done that and most used paper records, but he gave me two CDs with medical information from other offices saying his software was not compatible with their format. Those were extremely important medical records that were useless to him that way. I visited those offices to get my records on paper, although it was difficult to find a helpful secretary.

If I had a USB Medistick, how would a doctor want my medical information organized and formatted to be useful? It's a safe bet that few doctor's offices will put that information on your Medistick since they are concerned about the time to prepare it for you.

So far, even President Bush's intervention has had little effect on the push for



## Windows SIG

### July 24: Making Your PC Work for You

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 we'll be discussing "Making Your PC Work for You." 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



centralization of medical records. We are the ones suffering the repercussions of this lack of coordination. If I could simply get a report on the office visit, or procedures performed, from that doctor's office, perhaps I could type it up myself on the Medistick if there was a centralized format. As you know, there are other problems if you want to record doctor data for your own reference since they often aren't willing to give it to you. Also, the public is very suspicious about any governmental control of that information, and who would be exceptions to the rules, such as a prospective employer? If you got sick on a distant vacation, seems like that central database could be invaluable to a doctor or ER.

### Be Aware!

These are announcements I received, but I have not tried any of the products.

### Keep Track of Your Ink

AVPSoft.com has announced APFill Ink Coverage Meter 4.2. You can determine the cost of a document, and if needed, optimize the pages to spend less ink or toner and consequently money. APFill Ink Coverage Meter is ideal for home users who have a color printer, or print shops that print a large number of copies. Usually printer owners rely on the printer manufacturers that describe ink usage as being 5% ink coverage of an A4 page. With APFill Ink Coverage Meter in place, you will know the exact ink coverage and determine the accurate cost of a printed copy based on such properties as paper density, paper format and original color density.

APFill users can measure the ink coverage of the highlighted screen area when, for example, they preview the page in a graphic editor before printing. It's also possible to measure the ink coverage for every single page, or for the entire document in either PostScript or PDF format with CMYK separation up to 8 color spots. There's also a 'Selected area surface measurement' feature, allowing you to measure the area filled in with a specified color. The measurement results can be displayed in either pixels or any user-defined units.

APFill Ink Coverage Meter 4.2 is available for \$79.95 (US) for a single-user license. We offer user group members a 10% discount on the purchase of APFill Ink Coverage Meter. The coupon code is APFILL10PR.

The product requires Windows 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista. Registered users are entitled to free upgrades and technical support. Additional information on the product, as well as its 30-day evaluation copy is available from [www.avpsoft.com](http://www.avpsoft.com).

Product page link: [www.avpsoft.com/products/apfill/](http://www.avpsoft.com/products/apfill/)

Direct download link: [www.avpsoft.com/download/apfill.exe](http://www.avpsoft.com/download/apfill.exe) (2.55 MB)

### Another Data Recovery, But Its Free!

Smart Data Recovery is an effective and powerful, easy-to-use software program that enables the recovery of lost data. Restore your important files absolutely free. Smart Data Recovery is compatible with almost all kinds of data storage devices from computer hard drives to digital cameras. It supports flash drives, floppy disks, memory sticks, PC cards, multimedia cards, and secure digital cards. Smart Data Recovery restores all sorts of files, including electronic documents and pictures. It restores files from FAT32 and NTFS hard drives and has a really simple interface with Windows operations systems.

Even if the partition table is lost, the program gives you a chance to retrieve your important files. Smart Data Recovery applies a simple yet powerful algorithm that allows restoration of your lost data quickly and effectively. Smart Data Recovery also recovers any deleted files, including MS Office files, images, MP3 and zip files!

Smart Data Recovery runs on Windows NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista. The current version is downloadable free at [www.smartpctools.com](http://www.smartpctools.com) (820k). There are other interesting freeware products listed on their Web site (and some products that they charge for).

### PDF Anyone?

Acrobat is costly and there are cheaper ways to create a PDF. Pdf995 can be found at [www.pdf995.com](http://www.pdf995.com). People who have used the product say it produces a different file size, but works as well as other PDF software. The free version displays a sponsor page in your web browser each time you run the software, but doesn't put any advertising in the PDF file. If you prefer no sponsor pages, you may upgrade by obtaining individual keys for each product at any time for \$9.95 each, and also get email support. They also offer a deal for Pdf995, PdfEditor995, and Signature995 for \$19.95.

*[Ed. note: I've been using the free version of Pdf995 for several years, and have been pretty happy with it. It's what I use to create the PDF file for the newsletter each month, for example.]*

### That's All Folks

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (not offering a discount): [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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 at bellsouth dot net*



## Backing into Backup

by Jack Fogarty

An article in the May Megaphone on backing up computer data prompts me to tell of my successes. Our son Eric has always been on my back to “backup your data” and, of course, I never do. He even gave me a five-disk packet of 3.5” floppies (enough at the time) to do it. Oh, yes, I did use it to semi-annually store a DOS label-making program that is my electronic address book. One floppy holds the program plus data.

Fast forward to today. I'm on the Art Committee here at Friends House, a group responsible for pictures in the corridors. Among our sources for pictures is the Montgomery County Hospital Thrift Shop. A lady there keeps on eye out for framed “art” that might be of interest to us (most isn't).

Whenever I go to the thrift shop, I always check out the electronics shelves although there's nothing I'm looking for. Last time there I noticed an Iomega Zip drive with its USB cable wrapped around it sitting loose with a \$7.50 price tag on it. I never thought I needed a demountable storage unit but there it was. Even if it didn't work it'd be a small donation to the hospital. So I bought it.

At home I pondered the driver for it. The Iomega website showed nothing about driver downloading. At this point I plugged the Zip drive cable into a USB port in the back of the CPU box.

The green light came on and the unit gave a couple of sputters. So far so good. Somewhere along the way I checked the My Computer screen and discovered my new Zip drive pictured there as “Removable Device” with F: assigned to it! It looks like my XP operating system was expecting it...

From son Eric I got two Zip disks marked “Mac-formatted” and stuck one in the drive. “No format,” said the screen. “Want to format?” Sure, said I, and zip zip it was done. Now for the data test. On the My Computer screen I tried the “drag & drop” of My Documents to the F-drive. It took it and began to whirl. After a while it said “Disk full” and called for another disk. Fortunately I had one. “Format?” OK. Whir some more and “Disk full.” OK, enough of this stuff. All I wanted was an alive-or-dead test and it looks like I got a winner. On playback all the stuff was there and in folders, too. Am I backed up now? Well, no. A lot of the My Documents was pictures and audio files which I don't care about, but they sure take up space.

The next day I reformatted both disks and then “dragged & dropped” only the file folders I wanted to save. These text files of letters, lists and schedules only amounted to 27 MB on one 100-MB Zip disk. I now feel adequately “backed up”.



## Exploring Windows Explorer

by Jim Sanders, NOCCC

Everyone using Windows XP uses Windows Explorer all the time. Some use it in what I consider the true form. Some use it without knowing it, under the title of My Computer. And all of us when we are using Internet Explorer, because Windows Explorer is an integral part of Internet Explorer.

### Starting and Customizing Windows Explorer

I continue to be surprised at how many people do not know that you can right click on the Start button and go directly to Windows Explorer (that's what that “Explore” choice does). I prefer to call Windows Explorer that way rather than using the My Computer path because it brings up Windows Explorer with the left hand pane of the window displaying the tree structure of the files. If you do want folders after starting from My Computer, click the Folder button and you'll get the tree pane. (If you don't see the Folder button, choose View/Toolbars and check Standard Buttons.)

It's a little sad, how many people live with the default settings of Windows Explorer. One of the first things that I do with a new installation of Windows XP is to open Windows Explorer, go to the View menu and click on Details. The next step is to open the Tools menu, and click on Folder Options. When the Folder Options window opens, click on the View tab. Then click on “Display the full path in the title bar” to place a check mark in the box, click on “Show hidden files and folders” to put the bullet on that line, click on “Hide extensions for known file types” to remove the check mark. Personally, I think Microsoft did new users a major disservice by having the last item set true by default. The resulting confusion of having two or more files with the same name, and not differentiated by the file extension, causes a fair amount of distress in users that are not sure which file to choose.

I like to see the protected operating system files but you may be more comfortable leaving them hidden. The last item to check is “show control panel in My Computer.” Then click on Apply, wait for it to finish, then click on Apply to All Folders, then click on OK and you're done.

As a result of the above actions the right hand window pane will now have four columns: name, size, type, and date modified. The sort will be set to alphabetical by name, numbers and special characters first, then A to Z. If you want the sort to be Z to A, click on name at the top of the name column. (Note the little up-pointing or down-pointing triangle.)

If you want the file list sort to be by size, click on size at the top of the size column and Windows Explorer will sort the folder by file size, smallest file first. To reverse the order, and place the largest file at the top of the list, click on size again. The same procedure works with the type column and the date modified column.

There is a faint divider bar between each





of the columns located in the horizontal bar where the names of the columns are located. The easiest to see is one space to the right of the column heading Size. If you move the mouse cursor to that area you should see a double headed arrow appear. Clicking and holding the left mouse button will let you adjust the width of the edge of the columns. The width of the name column is often too narrow to show the complete file name. Having the complete path displayed in the address bar is often useful when you need to copy and paste that path into other applications.

When you have a lot of files in a folder, there is a navigation shortcut in the name column that too few people seem to know about. When you first open a folder, the display will show any other folders (or what should really be called subfolders) within that folder, followed by all the files, starting with the letter A. If you need to get to a file that starts with the letter T, you might have to scroll through several hundred files to get there. There is a faster way. Click on the first file in the folder to highlight it, then type the first letter of the file that you wish to find. In this example the display would immediately jump to the first file that starts with the letter T. If you know what you are searching for, and can type quickly, you can follow the first letter with the second letter of the name and it will take you to that point instead.

I think initially setting all folders on a hard disk to the detail view is the best starting point and is best suited for the majority of folders. Windows XP allows you to customize the view of each and every folder and will remember what settings you assigned to a given folder. For instance, for folders that contain photos it is often more useful if the thumbnail view, or the film strip view, is chosen so that you can see what each picture actually is. The advantage of the thumbnail view is that you can find images quicker than in the filmstrip view. The advantage of the filmstrip view is that you get a line of thumbnails across the bottom of the pane and a larger view of whichever thumbnail is highlighted. There are also mouse click arrows that allow you to view the next or previous image. Don't forget that you can right click on any of the thumbnails and bring up a whole new menu of things that you can do with the image.

## Organizing with Windows Explorer

Everybody should learn how to do file housekeeping on his or her computer disk. Being able to move files from one folder to another, to copy files from one folder to another, to create new folders, and several other functions along those lines can help you keep your data organized.

It should be noted that most of these functions can be accomplished in more than one fashion. For instance, if you wished to copy a file from folder A to folder B, you would first select the file by left clicking on it which will cause it to be highlighted. You could then open the edit menu by clicking on edit, then click on copy, then click on the destination folder, then click on paste in the edit menu, a copy of the file will appear in

## Upgrading to an LCD Monitor

by Herb Goldstein, via APCUG

I have been quite happy with my high quality CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor. It was with considerable reluctance that I recently decided to get with the modern era and upgrade to an LCD. It has been quite a learning experience. Looking back, I realize that there are a number of very important practical considerations of which I was unaware in making the change and in making a choice. Perhaps I can pass along a summary of them along with some insight gained by hands-on experience to make the experience a little easier for you than it was for me. You need to do your homework both before and during your investigation. Here are some of the most important things you should know.

An LCD monitor offers considerable advantages in upgrading from a CRT. It is infinitely lighter and takes up much less desk space than a CRT. It uses less electricity, and is devoid of radiation concerns. When properly installed, its display may prove brighter, sharper and provide superb color.

**SIZE:** In any size range, an LCD will display more viewable screen than a similarly sized CRT. I decided on a 19 incher, the size of my CRT that I was happy with. Seventeen may work for you if that's what pleased you on your CRT. Over 19 for average use is both too much screen and excessive cost for most people.

**SHAPE:** Most prefer a normal proportion screen (4:3 ratio) for average use. Wide (16:9 ratio) screens are available at comparable cost in the same size range, but consider carefully whether a widescreen will work for you. Remember that a 19" widescreen monitor will be a bit wider than a regular 19", but will also



that folder.

Alternately, you could use some of the keyboard shortcuts. You could highlight the file, press and hold down the Ctrl key and then tap the C key. This will copy the file to the temporary holding bin called clipboard. You would then highlight the destination folder, press and hold down the control key, then tap the V key which will paste the file from the clipboard to the folder you highlighted.

Another method is called drag and drop. In this method you move the mouse cursor over the file you wish to copy, left click and hold the mouse button, move the mouse to drag a ghost image of the file over the top of the destination folder and then release the left mouse button.

There are many more features of Windows Explorer to cover, but this is all the room I have for now. We will do more later.

*This article is reprinted from Orange Bytes, the newsletter of the North Orange County Computer Club ([www.noccc.org](http://www.noccc.org)). Jim Sanders is vice president of NOCCC, and can be reached by email at [jsanders@ligasmicro.com](mailto:jsanders@ligasmicro.com).*





be shorter. The resolution for a typical 19" screen is 1280 by 1024 pixels; a widescreen would be 1440 by 900 pixels.

Some makes offer a swivel screen that you can change from wide to tall and back again instantly. You will pay considerably more for this feature when it is available.

**COST:** Has been decreasing from a few thousand some short years ago to a few hundred today. A quality 17 inch LCD can be found today for well under \$200, and a 19 inch for less \$250. If you have a watchful eye, special sales are common and offer substantial saving.

**BRAND:** There is a very significant display quality to be gained in better models of better brands. The brands usually topping the review lists in computer publications are LG, NEC, Viewsonic, Dell and Samsung. Different models in the same brand provide different features. Check them out carefully on their respective websites and "Google" for reviews. You need to do your homework both before and during your shopping experiences if you want the best for your buck.

**WARRANTY:** Better brands provide a 3-year replacement on defective monitors. Don't settle for a one-year warranty!

**VIEWING ANGLE:** Unlike a CRT, an LCD's view falls off sharply at the sides when you are not positioned in front of your monitor. In practical usage, this should not be at all a problem. Your view will be just fine when you are normally seated at your screen, with more than sufficient leeway from the norm. *[Ed. note: this can be a concern if you routinely show people things on your computer screen, or need to demonstrate something to a couple of people.]*

**RESPONSE TIME:** Usually indicated in the advertising of better models. A faster response time is better--it indicates how quickly the screen can refresh a video image. If an LCD's response time is too slow, the display's pixels won't be able to keep up with the information sent from the computer's graphics card, and you may see ghosting and digital noise as a result. 8ms or better response time is common on quality LCDs and is preferred! The lower the response time, the less of a blurring effect is possible on the screen. Response time is especially important for games; it's less of a concern if you're mostly doing, say, word processing.

**ANALOG VS. DIGITAL:** Video cards can provide outlets for two different monitor display types, analog and digital. CRT monitors are cabled to your video card with an analog (15 pin) cable. LCDs usually provide the same cable and connection but also offer a significantly better display when attached via a digital (VDI-D) to a digital port on your video card. Better LCDs provide both digital and analog connections. So do better video cards. If your card doesn't have a digital port, you can either replace the card with one that does, or you can add an additional card. Easy to do. Just plug it into a PCI slot and your computer will recognize it. You are really better off in many ways with a better card.

If need be, you can run your LCD with the same analog connection as you used for your CRT previously,

but a digital connection will give you better results.

**NATIVE RESOLUTION:** LCD monitors will provide their best display when run at their "native resolution" which varies with the size of the monitor. For a 19 inch, the native resolution is 1280x1024.

The resolution of a display can be changed easily by right-clicking on an empty area of your desktop and selecting "properties," and "settings." The same can be accomplished through your Control Panel in your Start Menu. Normally the correct choice will be made automatically by the installation software that accompanies your new monitor.

When you change your most common CRT setting of 1080x760 to 1280x1024, everything, including all your icons and fonts, will suddenly appear smaller. Your LCD display however will become infinitely sharper. If you find it strange to your eyes, you can easily change your display properties to provide larger fonts. Additionally, many programs like word processors permit you to change your text to any size you wish while maintaining its quality, regardless of screen resolution.

Running at native resolution (your choice to do or not, but very highly recommended) will make your screen display smaller but you will be able to accommodate more viewed area on a page. It may be take a little while to adjust, but the greatly increased sharpness and over-all quality of your LCD display will more than make up for the size, especially if you are using digital rather than analog display.

**AUTO-DISPLAY:** Most quality LCD monitors will automatically install at their best display settings when you plug them in. However, they will also provide menu settings for most of their values that permit you to easily adjust the display to what is most pleasing to your eyes. The most common adjustment people make is for brightness. Most LCD monitors tend to be too bright unless adjusted. LCD screen illumination is entirely different and better than that from a CRT.

**RUNNING MULTIPLE MONITORS:** What to do with your CRT now that you have your new LCD? One of your choices may be to keep it and run two monitors side-by-side. If you are using Windows XP and you have two ports on your video card (or two video cards), it's easy to do with a few simple settings in your display properties menu. You will then be able to display two different programs at the same time and easily drag items from one monitor screen to the other. Your cursor will readily mouse from one monitor to the other alongside. It can double your productivity and allow you to see and do things you did not know were possible.

Over all, upgrading to an LCD monitor will greatly enhance your computer experience and enjoyment. I found the advantages to far outweigh the effort and expense involved.

*This article comes to us via APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Herb Goldstein is the Software Evaluation Chairman and Reviews Editor for the Sarasota PCUG ([www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)) in Florida. He can be reached by email at [revieweditor@spcug.org](mailto:revieweditor@spcug.org).*



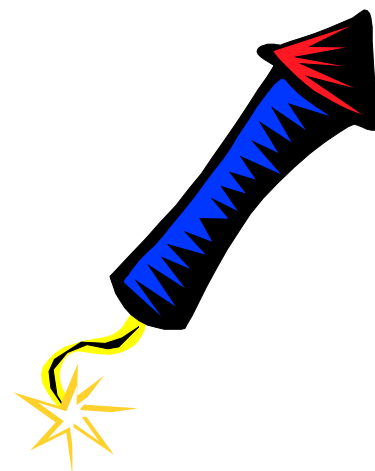
# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:

**Wednesday, July 18, 7:30 pm**

Kacey Fisher of Fisher Theatrical on computer control of live events, and designing theaters and sets using CAD software.



## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

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Send renewals and address changes to:

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### Editorial Copy

Send articles, letters, ad copy, questions, and comments to:

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

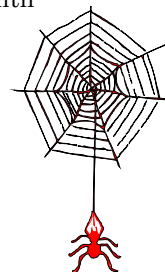
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General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$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**