**MEETING SCHEDULE**

Sunday, January 18, 2015

11:00 -11:25 am Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers, Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings

ROOM # 311

11:00 - 11:25 pm PACC BOD Meeting

ROOM # 301

11:35 - 12:00 pm Windows New Users

ROOM # 301

12:00 - 12:30 pm General Meeting, Raffle.

12:35 - 2:30pm WPS Office (pg. 1) ToolWiz Care, Microsoft Mathematics (pg. 2)

ROOM # 301

2:35 - 3:30 pm More programs and utilities ……

ROOM # 301

2:05 - 3:30 pm Hardware SIG

ROOM # 311 Users Helping Users - guests included

1:00 - 3:30 pm Linux SIG, Members Helping Members,

ROOM # 311 Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange

3:30 - 4:00 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

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**WINDOWS SIG**

“With over 700 million users worldwide, WPS Office is one of the most popular office suites for PC and mobile users. WPS Office is 100% compatible with Microsoft Office and available for Windows and Linux PCs as well as iPhones, iPads and Android devices.”

“Familiar Look. Innovative Features. Includes Presentation, Writer and Spreadsheets, Fully compatible with Microsoft PowerPoint, Word and Excel’ Supports DOC, XLS, PPT, TXT, PDF and more, Easily switch between open documents using our Priority Tabs feature, Quickly share documents with built in emailing function, Keep your work safe with autosave and document encryption, Access to 100’s of free templates Access to WPS Cloud and File Roaming”

“Writer

Fully compatible with Microsoft Word, Rich text, paragraph and shape formatting features, Make quick changes to margins and spacing using our Paragraph tool, Advanced collaboration features including track changes, spell check and comments, Numerous page layout tools, And more…..”

“Presentation

Fully compatible with Microsoft PowerPoint
Beautifully designed user interface, Advanced text, paragraph and shape formatting features, Add photos, videos, sound and more to presentations, Insert and edit graphs, charts and tables, Includes dozens of templates, View notes in presenter mode, And much more …. ”

“Spreadsheets

Fully compatible with Microsoft Excel, Over 160 formula and function shortcuts, Supports pivot tables, freeze frames, sorting, table

(Continued on page 2)
“ToolWiz Care” is an excellent freeware solution. The main tab called Checkup offers the one-click feature, system resource information, and some optional features. Since there is no paid version to upgrade to, all the features are functional. On the downside, the program is missing any help to learn all the fancy bells and whistles. The GUI interface is clean and colorful. The program loads quickly and performs smoothly. The tray icon provides many options from a right-click popup menu including the floating toolbar. Hover your mouse over the toolbar to see system resource information. The toolbar says “Time Freeze is Off”. Time freeze works like a sandbox. If you’re not sure what a sandbox is, read this article. On the right edge of the tool bar is an icon called screen capture. It’s like the Windows’ 7 Snipping Tool. Screen Capture will let you capture parts of your screen to save as a picture image, or edit in the ToolWiz Picture Editor. This program has a lot of useful features, some not particularly related to system cleaning so I won’t review them, but they could be worth checking out. As a one-click cleaning tool ToolWiz is very good. While I appreciate the fact ToolWiz is free and the developer doesn’t solicit donations, the lack of help and support can leave the novice user floundering with all the gadgets.”
IoTMT (Internet of Too Many Things)
By Greg Skalka, President,
Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
August 2014 issue, Drive List
www.uchug.org    President (at) uchug.org

The Internet of Things (IoT) describes a situation in which everything is networked together on the Internet. Presently computers, tablets and smart phones dominate the Internet, but other kinds of devices are being added to the network all the time. A lot of us probably have some of these other devices already. I have networked hard drives and IP cameras that can be accessed through the Internet from anywhere I can connect. My smart TV and networked Blu-ray player can receive content, including streaming media, from the Internet. There are already refrigerators, thermostats, door locks, sprinkler timers and light bulbs available that can be connected through the Internet. It is said that the real power of the IoT will come about when machine to machine (M2M) communication is the predominant traffic. All that interconnectedness holds the promise of greater efficiency, knowledge and control in our lives. At that point, however, will humans get to use the Internet anymore, or will we have reached the Internet of Too Many Things? Is there too much stuff on the Internet now?

The power to control or query objects over the Internet is just the beginning. It is great to be able to check the weather report online while away on vacation, and remotely turn off your landscape irrigation when rain is forecast at home. This still requires thought and intervention on your part, however. With the appropriate weather sensors and intelligence, your sprinkler controller could measure the local weather conditions and adjust its irrigation cycles autonomously, but this would require costly sensors that you would also have to maintain. Since local weather information is already available on the Internet, it would be more cost effective to have the sprinkler timer query the Internet for the local weather and adjust its operations accordingly, saving water and money. A sprinkler controller like this will be available soon (www.skydrop.com).

Many common devices could provide additional benefits by being networked. Refrigerators could sense when they were empty and order grocery deliveries. Cars could schedule their own periodic maintenance and service appointments.

Once “things” can get their own information from the Internet, they should also be able to communicate with each other. This will provide us with more benefits and greater efficiency, while freeing us from the drudgery of monitoring every aspect of our household’s operation. Home lights and ac that are informed of your car’s arrival and greet you with a pleasant environment are just the beginning. Garage door openers could be told by your car that the engine has started, and open the door automatically. This would have the additional benefit of inhibiting potential suicides (for those determined enough to close the door manually, the opener could contact the online suicide hotline).

If our present Internet of Few Things is any indication, the benefits provided by this future Internet of Many Things may be offset by questions raised and problems created. Security is a significant problem for our online lives today; an exponential increase in networked devices probably means a similar increase in risks. Our government is concerned about the implications that networked infrastructure such as the electrical grid, ground and air traffic control systems and water distribution would have for national security; hopefully those implementations will be secure enough. There is typically less concern for security on the consumer level, but in an IoT world the effects could be just as troubling. If the electrical grid controls were sufficiently protected, terrorists (or criminals) could perhaps achieve the same ends by taking control of the devices in the homes and businesses on the grid. Instead of turning power off at the source, all loads on the grid could be remotely turned off (or on, perhaps overloading the grid).

Internet-connected TVs and refrigerators have already been hacked; now add light bulbs to that list. An Internet security firm recently demonstrated that LIFX smart LED bulbs (http://lifx.co) can be hacked due to deficiencies in their security. The company released a firmware upgrade to correct the security problem, but how many existing users of their light bulbs will be able to perform the update?

That is one of the unintended consequences of the IoT - having microcontrollers in most items in your home. And with microcontrollers come firmware, and with firmware comes firmware updates. I already get firmware upgrade messages on my Samsung Smart TV. What happens when I have to perform firmware updates on my toaster oven, microwave, blender, electronic door lock, water heater, electric razor and toilet? Will I spend all my time checking and updating my household devices? If I leave it to my “things” to update themselves unsupervised, will that just open up a gaping security hole?

Another unintended consequence of having so many smart devices is all the information they generate. While more information is usually good, too much information may not be. I already get texts and emails from Amazon when my packages ship. I get informed by my bank when my credit card is used without the card being physically present to the merchant (as in online). I get informed when the tracking device in the car my daughter drives leaves a specified location. All these messages are useful, but I am finding that most of the texts I am receiving on my phone are these automated messages, not communications from humans. I can see the benefit in having my refrigerator tell me that its inside temperature is 60 degrees F. I would like to know if my water heater thinks it is leaking. I can’t, however, imagine any communications I might need to have from my electric toothbrush, electric razor or electric can opener. I hope device manufacturers would keep this in mind and not spam us with messages from our own products. I think most IoT devices would best be seen and not heard from.

An obvious consequence of the IoT world is the need for more Wi-Fi bandwidth. No one wants to have to route Cat5 cable to their refrigerator or have an RJ-45 socket on their electric razor. Most all IoT connections will need to be through Wi-Fi. This will require everyone to have a Wi-Fi router, causing greater interference issues, especially in apartments. Encrypted links will be required for security, perhaps leading to more configuration and connection problems. Fortunately, for most devices other than TVs and computers, the bandwidth required on each connection will be very low.

Too Much Information?

With the IoT, there will definitely be more information available on the workings of your household appliances and thus your household. Privacy may be a major issue. Recently manufactured cars continuously record operational data that includes speed, miles and how a car is driven. This information can be useful to insurance companies to better rate drivers. It is also of interest to the police in accident investigations, and to lawyers when they become involved. There are concerns now about who owns this data and who can have access to it. I hope the IoT devices don’t raise the same legal questions. I don’t want to see my appliances being required to “testify” against me.

The big fear of course is that through the IoT our devices may unite and turn against us. Hopefully our household appliances won’t collaborate with each other and our national intelligence assets, become self-aware and attempt to exterminate all humans. I’d hate to think my GPS car tracking device could be the start of the Terminator. If it is,
though, we have unfortunately given the enemy too much help already, as the one thing I feel there is definitely too much of on the Internet is information - the personal kind.

In the 1984 sci-fi movie “The Terminator,” the T-800 Terminator cyborg (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) travels back in time from 2029 to 1984 Los Angeles to kill Sarah Connor, the mother of the person that will lead to the machines’ defeat in the future. Not having the Internet as a resource in 1984, the Terminator had to use a paper phone book to methodically find and eliminate all three Sarah Connors listed there. If the Terminator had arrived in 2014 instead, its job would have been much easier, as Sarah Connor no doubt would have posted an abundance of personal information, including photos and perhaps even a schedule, on her Facebook page. Accessing her postings, the cyborg would have no doubt been able to find her more easily, and perhaps more quickly identify her from among the other Sarah Connors.

Most of us have performed a Google search on our names to see what information was available about ourselves. How many have also done a Google Image search? I’ve found the results are interesting. I’m pretty careful about keeping my personal information off the Internet (I don’t have a Facebook page, and only have the most basic stuff on my LinkedIn page, with no photo). My Google Image search found only one photo of me, from my Southwest 2014 presentation. There actually is another Greg Skalka in Texas, who was foolish enough to provide LinkedIn with a photo; he is the first search result listed. With an uncommon name like mine, the remaining results are much less related. I guess we’d all better hope my offspring aren’t the source of humanity’s savior from the IoT gone berserk; as the Terminator would likely be done with me in one shot and wouldn’t have to “be back.”

Open Source Lab - KGeography
By Cal Esneault, former President of CCCC
and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs,
Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA
March 2014 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
www.clickers.org  ccnewsletter (at) cox.net

KDE (K Desktop Environment) is a very popular set of Linux software that is available as the default desktop system for many popular distributions. Since initial release in 1996, it has gone through four major version families (KDE 1.x, 2.x, 3.x, and 4.x). With the release of the development toolkit Qt 4, much of the KDE software will soon also be available for Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X.

What you may fail to realize is that there are many useful applications available through the KDE Community web site. For example, from the site kde.org/applications/education, the list shown below is a limited sample of available software. One that I recently tried for my Ubuntu system was KGeography (note that many KDE applications have the letter “K” prominently displayed in the title).

In KGeography, you first choose the country map that you want to investigate. Below I have selected France. Within each map the next geographic subdivision is displayed on the map (possible options include regions, territories, counties, etc.).

After selecting the map of the desired country, a larger map is displayed along with a side panel consisting of several categories for you to test and build your geographical knowledge. For example, the next map shows the country of Canada as a selection with its provinces outlined with different color schemes. By clicking on each province, you will get a display of the province’s name, capital, and flag.

After you become familiar with the information, there is a “Test Yourself” section where you can be queried to identify the location, capital, or flag of a series of provinces. At the end of the quiz, you will get the score and results of each question. Below is a sample result of a series of 5 questions.

KGeography provides an entertaining way to familiarize you or your children with the details of many countries. Well-known locations are the easiest to start, but you will be challenged as you work your way through less familiar sites. My experience was that flag identification was the most difficult.

This is only one example of a KDE education application. There are many others types of programs available in such categories as office, multimedia, graphics, business, games, screensavers, etc. Currently these apps are available through the repository of most modern Linux distributions. Enjoy!
Hugin (http://hugin.sourceforge.net/ available for Linux, OS X, and Windows) is my preferred tool for creating panoramas. The screenshot shows two of the six frames that I stitched together to create a panorama. In previous screens, I selected the images and told Hugin to create control points (points in different images that should coincide on the panorama). These appear as crosses identified by numbers in squares. The table below the images shows the offset distances (in pixels) between the points when they are overlaid. The green bar above the images indicates that Hugin is happy with the alignment; however, I had to eliminate several points to get this approval. If the number had become too small, I could have added more by hand, but this is tedious and fortunately is seldom necessary.

The resulting panorama appears below, although I adjusted the brightness and contrast with RawTherapee and GIMP after Hugin had finished with it. The Olympus bundled image processor also creates panoramas as do many modern cameras, but I find that often the results from Hugin are far superior. Hugin doesn't understand raw, so you must develop your images before using it. Although most panoramas are one-dimensional, that is composed of a single row of images, Hugin can create two dimensional ones, made from multiple rows of images. You also can choose from several different projections when creating the final image.

High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography attempts to overcome the dynamic range issue. You are probably disappointed with some of your pictures where the blue sky and white clouds have become a uniform pure white, and you can see nothing the shadows, which have become pure black. While recording in raw format can help some, it too has much less dynamic range than our eyes. The solution is to take several pictures of the same scene with different exposures. Some will have the highlights properly exposed (but the shadows will be black) and some will show what is in the shadows (but the highlights will be white). We then use clever software to combine these so that a single image shows both the highlights and the shadows. The problem is that there is no way to display the result, since the usual media (computer displays and paper prints) all have severely limited dynamic range.

(Continued on page 6)
Thus we must perform tone mapping, which decreases the exposure of the highlights and increases that of the shadows and yet doesn't cause color shifts or other unpleasant effects. If done properly, the result is a low dynamic range image that looks close to what our eyes saw originally. If done improperly, the result can be a caricature, more artistic than realistic. Many modern cameras can perform HDR processing directly, but as with panoramas, adding human judgment to the process often greatly improves the result.

The screen-shot shows Luminance HDR (available for Linux, OS X, and Windows) working on a high-dynamic-range image, which was created by combining five raw images with different exposures (-2, -1, 0, +1, and +2 EV). The camera was hand-held, and the auto-alignment feature of Luminance was used to align them. Compare this to the LightZone screen-shot in my March 2014 article and you can see that the exposure of the room here is much better and that through the window is marginally so. (This isn't because of a shortcoming of LightZone, which after all had only a single image to work with.) More exposures covering a wider range than four f-stops would have produced a better image. As with LightZone, Luminance HDR has no provision for correcting distortion, so further processing with GIMP (or pre-processing with RawTherapee) is needed. Also, if you look carefully at the edges of the image, you can see where the images did not line up. Again, a light cropping with GIMP would remove this.

In some cases, I've found that although Luminance HDR uses the Hugin algorithm to align the input images, the alignment isn't that good. I can often do better by using Hugin to align the images and create a floating-point HDR file, which I then input to Luminance HDR for tone mapping. I assume this is because in Hugin I can optimize the control points, where using Luminance HDR everything is automatic.

The screen-shot shows the last step in the creation of the image. In previous screens I selected the files, let the program align them, and created a high-dynamic-range image. This screen shows the tone mapping, where the dynamic range is compressed so that it can be displayed using a low-dynamic-range medium such as a display or a print. The thumbnails along the right allow selection of the mapping algorithm, and each has a different set of controls, shown on the left. Drago processing, shown here, has only two parameters, which makes it quick to adjust. The strength and the weakness of Luminance HDR is the freedom to choose from eight algorithms and your control over the parameters of each. Knowing the best algorithm for each image and developing a feel for how the parameters affect the tone mapping takes a good bit of experience. Those used to the hand-holding provided by commercial software will find their initial experiences frustrating.

HDR photography is tricky and tedious, and works only in special cases. For example, outdoor pictures with large areas of foliage in the foreground are seldom satisfactory, because the leaves are always being blown about, and this makes it impossible to align the individual images. Luminance HDR has an anti-ghosting feature to overcome this problem, but it works best when the motion is confined to a small area. If you think you have a situation that calls for this technique, go ahead and take your pictures with their bracketed exposures. Before you start the HDR process though, select just one or these images and develop it carefully with the tone-mapping features of RawTherapee or LightZone. I often find that the result is just fine.

Expect some frustration from your first digital image processing efforts. It was a big day for me when I could consistently obtain results that were as good as the JPEG images straight from the camera. I find it helpful to display a camera JPEG image to which I can compare the one on which I'm working. It's easy to go seriously wrong, one small logical step at a time, if you work without a reference.

References:
Montabone: Beginning Digital Image processing Using Free Tools for Photographers, which I referenced in the previous article, also discusses Hugin and Luminance HDR. He refers to the latter by its original name, qtpfsqui. http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/ – contains many very valuable tutorials on photography and image processing. I also referenced this in the previous article, but I mention it again because it includes HDR and panoramic techniques. http://hugin.sourceforge.net/tutorials/index.shtml – has several tutorials on using Hugin.
Bloch: The HDRI Handbook 2.0 – is comprehensive discussion of HDRI theory and processing, geared toward commercial software and includes a DVD with free and trial commercial software. The author does not care for Luminance HDR, but he is a professional for whom throughput is more important than cost. http://blog.patdavid.net/2013/05/hdr-photography-with-foss-tools.html – is a very helpful guide to the tone mapping tools in Luminance HDR.
“HDRI Photography” at http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/download – is a good introduction to the topic and to Luminance HDR.
What Exactly Is Linux
Stuart Jones, MD, Member, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, Pennsylvania
June 2014 issue, The LVCG Journal
www.lvcg.org
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Everybody who has used a personal computer (PC)—desktop, laptop, notebook, and tablet, whatever—knows about Windows. Microsoft Windows, to be exact. Most of the PC’s in the world use Windows as their ‘operating system’. As many know, a computer system is made of hardware (the actual machinery—the physical computer) and software (the instructions installed into the hardware to make it work). The ‘operating system’ is the most basic part of software—the software that manages the physical computer so that other programs (so-called ‘applications software’) can make the computer do things that are useful to human beings. For most people, these useful things involve looking up information on the Internet, sending and receiving electronic mail, writing and printing documents, and playing computer games. Most computer users can be happily unaware of what is going on inside their computer, and this is as it should be. A computer, like a toaster, should ‘just work’. Though we hear the most about computers when they don’t work as they should, for the most part, they do. Microsoft Windows can take some credit for this reliability, though this has depended in part of which version of Windows is being used (the best, by far, has been Windows 7).

Since Windows works so well for so many people, why would anyone wish to use a different operating system? Up to now, most people haven’t bothered. A few know that a copy of Windows on your computer costs up to $100, but they are used to paying $400 and up for a computer, and that cost is built into the overall price. Having learned since 1995 how to use any version of Windows, folks are not eager to learn a new way of doing things. A very few people who know a bit more about computers are not happy with the way Microsoft has run their part of the computer business, but for the most part, these folks are ignored by the rest of us.

However, a VERY small group of VERY well educated computer people had complained very loudly for decades about how Microsoft had dominated the operating system business, and how poorly various versions of Windows have worked...from their expert perspective. Another small group of computer experts years ago decided to develop their own computer operating system. This group was led by Richard Stallman, who is best known for his assertion that ALL software should be distributed including its source code (the original computer language text that defines what the software is and does). His group developed a set of outstanding programming tools (programs used to develop other programs, but had difficulty developing their own operating system (GNU). In 1991, this crowd was joined by a computer science major from the University of Helsinki, Finland, named Linux Torvalds. He had written a personal version of an operating system, modeled on an operating system called ‘UNIX’, which had been built for the very large computers of the 1970’s and 1980’s. Linus spread his new program over the Internet to a worldwide group of similarly inclined programmers, who dubbed the results ‘LINUX’, in his honor. (Since Linus and others used the GNU tools, their operating system is sometimes called ‘GNU-LINUX, to give well-deserved’ credit to Stallman’s group.)

At first, LINUX was very limited compared to Windows. However, since LINUX cost nothing, and could be downloaded and modified freely, it became popular among computer experts, who formed an international community around improving LINUX. Similar programmer communities developed other free and open software projects, which came to include many types of programs usually (in the Windows world) sold for profit. In addition, software was added to the LINUX project that created the same sort of ‘user interface’ (the methods people use to make the computer do things) that was provided by Windows (as well as the Apple Macintosh operating system, OS/X)—that is, using icons, a mouse, and keyboard, as well as video graphics (the so-called ‘GUI’—Graphical User Interface). The number of computer programmers working on free software projects rapidly increased to number over 100 million people, located everywhere reached by the Internet (which, as we know, now covers nearly all of our planet).

Until recently, this meant little or nothing to most computer owners. However, Microsoft, in perhaps the most stupid business decision ever seen in the software business, first published a new version of Windows (Windows 8) which drastically changed the user interface, to the dismay (and LOUD complaints) of everyone buying a new computer with this installed. They then compounded this idiocy by announcing and enforcing (by frankly unethical actions) ‘end of life’ for the Windows XP version that was still being used by the majority of computer owners, to force all of them to buy a newer version. They then made the situation far worse by insisting that all these folks change to Windows 8, even though nearly all preferred Windows 7 (which kept the old user interface), and keeping the price of a Windows 7 license higher than one for Windows 8 ($90 minimum, PER COMPUTER). As of April, 2014, Windows XP was no longer updated and supported by Microsoft. This means that anyone still using XP will be in danger of having their computer afflicted with viruses and other malware, and of having their personal data stolen by the criminals who create this garbage.

Add to all this the ongoing economic crisis of 2008 to the present, there are a lot of computer owners who can ill afford the expense of a Windows upgrade, particularly if (as many do) they have 2 or more computers in their household. Fortunately for them, and for all other disgruntled current Microsoft Windows owners (dare we call them victims?), LINUX presents a really excellent alternative. Relatively few, unfortunately, have heard about LINUX, and those who have mostly think that it is strictly for computer experts (the so-called ‘nerdocracy’). Due to the efforts of those millions of free software programmers, this is no longer true. There are versions of LINUX that install more easily than Windows, run faster on the same computer hardware, and are EASIER to use than Windows 7, let alone 8. The author’s current favorite version is Zorin LINUX, which can even be set up to LOOK like Windows XP or Windows 7.

Even those who know more about LINUX may be confused by the enormous (several hundred at last count) versions of LINUX plus additional programs that are available as ‘distributions’. Each of these ‘distros’ combines the LINUX operating system proper with many additional programs that manage the user interface, and also take care of tasks for which Windows users habitually pay $30-$50 (apiece!!) for a program package dedicated to each function (such as listening to music, burning CD’s and DVD’s, and performing office tasks). Each distribution is put together by a team of programmers (and user interface designers, artists, and documentation writers) who choose what will be included and how it will all work together. The result of their efforts is a package of software that can be run (without being copied to hard disk storage) ‘live’ on any recent PC, or installed on that PC either replacing Windows, or alongside Windows. (In this last case, the user chooses which operating system to use when the computer starts up or restarts.) There are special distros designed to be run old equipment (as old as Intel 486 class!), netbook computers, and even exotic computers that aren’t, strictly speaking, PC’s. In fact, the Android operating system run by most cellular phones and tablet computers is a distro of LINUX, and there is even a distro designed for the XBOX gaming system, that turns this into a full-fledged computer usable for most PC tasks. The server computers that run the Internet (about 95% of them) run LINUX, as do some of the very large IBM computers used by banks and stock exchanges. As this is written, if you include all

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the tablets and cell phones, there are many MORE computers in the world running LINUX than run Windows!

LINUX is, without a doubt, the largest little-known phenomenon in high technology, and really, ENORMOUSLY, deserves to be better known by ordinary people. Because of the enormous networks of volunteers and paid experts who contribute to the LINUX project, as well as the thousands of other free and open software projects around the world, there is an absolutely HUGE community of LINUX experts available to help other folks who would like to use this software on their PC’s, alongside or instead of Windows. Help is available via the Internet from numerous websites, and also from many regional and national LINUX user groups. Paid assistance for LINUX users is also available, from consultants and also from large organizations (including IBM!). Entire communities (including, at present, mainland China (!) and the Russian Republic) have adopted LINUX as their official government operating system, and a number of medium sized cities across the world have also done so.

Though Microsoft Windows (especially after the company retreats from its current idiocy, which seems imminent) will still have a large presence on PCs, it appears that LINUX will conquer a large segment of the PC market, and therefore will soon assume a much larger role in personal computing at the desktop and laptop level. Regardless, LINUX will continue to be developed by its various programmer communities, and will continue to power the Internet, cellular telephones, and a host of other ‘smart devices’ (such as automobiles), the owners of which will likely remain blissfully unaware that they are using LINUX.

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The biggest obstacle going from a Mac to a Windows machine is getting used to the new Windows 8 Tile structure. Even though the layout may work with Touch-screens, it doesn't work well with a Mouse. The second biggest thing that took some getting used to is, not booting your computer is acting strange or slow, and they've installed some software that didn't know about…Please believe them. Because I have been in the PC and Mac fields for more than 30 years and even I got fooled.

Keep your virus scanners up to date (yes, I hate to say it: even on your Mac). These spammers are finding very creative ways to get your attention and even download stuff in the background.

Always take time when installing a new piece of software. Read all the installation windows and make sure it is installing the software that you want - even from a company you trust.

When receiving a notice that you need an update, do not click on the notice window. Exit out of it and go to the actual company's web site and make sure that the update is real.

Keep your virus scanners up to date (yes, I hate to say it: even on your Mac). These spammers are finding very creative ways to get your attention and even download stuff in the background.

Hopefully this little rant will help you to not fall into the same trap as I did. If you have a friend or a family member who claims that their computer is acting strange or slow, and they've installed some software that they didn't know about...Please believe them. Because I have been in the PC and Mac fields for more than 30 years and even I got fooled.

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The Mac Corner – June 2014
Danny Uff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, Pennsylvania
June 2014 issue, The LVCG Journal
www.lvcg.org
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Before I begin, yes, this is The Mac Corner, and yes, I do work on Macs all the time.

But last month, I did something that I swore I would never do again...... I bought a Windows 8.1 computer. Yes, I finally ran into a brick wall with the Mac and HAD to go back to the "enemy" again.

So, now that I got that out, what is it like going FROM a Mac to a Windows box? Since this is a family oriented newsletter, I'll keep it clean. It's like going FROM a 2014 Mercedes to a 1975 Beetle.

The biggest obstacle going from a Mac to a Windows machine is getting used to the new Windows 8 Tile structure. Even though the layout may work with Touch-screens, it doesn't work well with a Mouse. The second biggest thing that took some getting used to is, not booting directly to the Desktop. Being an old Windows user (since Windows 3.0) it took me a while to get used to the new tile layout.

So, in closing, I can hear some of you readers saying "I told you so!" or "Welcome back to the real world." But like the old saying goes "You CAN teach an old dog new tricks."

Oh, by the way, yes, I will still write about Macs in the coming months. :-)

P.S. This article was written on a Mac!!!!!
Music and Video Files: Modify Them to Your Needs

By Phil Sorrentino, Staff Writer,
The Computer Club, Inc., Sun City Center, FL
June 2014 issue, The Journal
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philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Music and Video files that you produce with your video camera, or voice recorder, are not always exactly what you want. Now, I’m not suggesting that you can change the artistic quality of the file, but that you can change the file length or size to accommodate your particular needs. With either an audio or a video file, the particular file may be too long, or it may contain sections that are not needed. So, it would be nice to be able to cut off the beginning, the end, or remove a slice somewhere in between. I’m sure there are many other ways to accomplish these tasks, but I have found that Windows Movie Maker (to modify video files) and Audacity (to modify audio or music files) are good choices, and both of these software applications are free. Windows Movie Maker is provided by Microsoft and can be downloaded at www.windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/get-movie-maker-download, and Audacity is provided by Sourceforge and can be downloaded at www.sourceforge.net/download.

A multi-media presentation, or “movie” as Movie Maker (and many other commercial packages) calls it, is a collection of pictures, videos, and music, organized as a movie, used to tell a story. It may be the story of your latest vacation, your last birthday, the last big holiday, your youngest grandchild, or a pictorial history of someone, something, or some organization. If you have appropriate pictures, videos, and music, Movie Maker can easily put them together to create a movie to express your particular point of view. So, obtaining the pictures, videos, and music is usually the first step in producing your movie. Pictures are probably the easiest; you just review the pictures, improve their quality if needed, and then put them in an appropriate sequence. Videos are a little more difficult because they usually need to be shortened, and possibly have inappropriate sections removed. Music, or audio, is easy if you have good recordings, but sometimes you may want to remove certain portions, like bad scratches or pops, or a long lead-in or long lead-out. Or you might only want a few words out of a lengthy narration.

Movie Maker can be used as a tool for modifying video clips. (Once the video clips are the way you want, you can then add them to your movie.) After opening Movie Maker, click “add videos and photos”, and navigate to the video clip that you want to modify. Select the video clip and it will be added as the only item in your movie. The video clip will be imported and shown as a series of Video blocks. Now you can play your video clip using the Play and Pause buttons, and identify the pieces to be removed. Select “Edit,” under Video Tools, and you will see the “Split” tool. Move the Movie Cursor (the dark vertical bar) to the first point where you would like to split the video. If you are going to remove the beginning, move to the point where you would like the video to begin. Click the Split tool. This will create two videos, one before the split and one after the split. Right click the video piece to be removed and select “Remove.” This will delete that piece of the video. Now you can move through the video and identify pieces to remove and pieces to keep. Just move the Cursor to the locations to split the video and use the Split tool. Then Remove the unwanted pieces and save the good piece as a new video with a new name. Usually you will find pieces to keep and pieces to remove interspersed. If you want to save many pieces, you will probably have to find a piece to save and delete everything else, and then start over with the original video and isolate the next piece and delete everything else. So it may be very tedious if you want to save a lot of small pieces from one larger video, but it will surely be worth the time and effort. Once you have video pieces, you can join them by starting with a “File-New” movie and adding the video pieces using “add videos and photos.” Put them in the proper sequence and add a “transition” in between so they will flow smoothly, then save it as a new video.

Audacity is an Audio Editor and Recorder. Audacity is very comprehensive and can do many things. One of those things is that it can be used as a tool for modifying audio (sound or music) files. After opening Audacity, click File-Open and navigate to the audio clip that you want to modify. The audio clip will be imported and shown as a graph of the amplitude of the audio. (Both Left and Right channels will be displayed if the audio is in stereo). Now you can Play your clip using the Play and Pause buttons and identify the pieces to be removed. No, or very low, volume periods will be indicated by just a horizontal line with no amplitude. The Audio Cursor can be placed on the recording by Right-clicking on a point in the recording. A section of the recording can be selected by pressing the Right Mouse button while on the recording, and dragging the Mouse to the end of the area to be selected. Then using the File-Export Selection, the selected section can be saved as a new audio file with a new name. I found this tool very helpful in separating multiple cuts from an audio recording of a complete side of a vinyl recording (a record album for those of us over 40). I had converted my old vinyl recordings to .mp3 files, just before giving them away. To save time I converted the recordings a side at a time. So for each vinyl album I ended up with two .mp3 files, each about 20 to 25 minutes, and each having 12 to 16 cuts (songs) in each .mp3 file. So, the individual songs were separated by about 2 seconds of silence (no amplitude), making them easy to identify, once you have listened to the cut using Audacity.

As you can see from these basic directions for modifying a video file with Movie Maker and an audio file with Audacity, the process is very similar, even though the displays look very different and the displayed file representations look very different. The results are very similar too; it’s a modified file that will be useful in your next Movie Making project.

Merging Photos

By Larry Piper, President,
Midland Computer Club, MI
April 2014 issue, Bits and Bytes Newsletter
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webbyte (at) yahoo.com

Ever see a row of photos at the top of a Facebook or website page? I’ll bet it crossed your mind that this would be a good idea for one of your own projects.

I’ll bet your next thought was that it would take a powerful photo editing tool, most likely Photoshop, to accomplish this horizontal photo montage. Sure enough, when you did some cursory checking, words like ‘layers’ and ‘flattening’ began to appear. Or maybe you found how to ideas for creating a photo collage’, which is NOT what you had in mind.

I too went down this same road. I also discovered that the most recommended solution is to use Paint, a free program that comes with Windows. I found the Paint solution not very intuitive and a little time consuming to use. Then I discovered another solution that had been right in front of me for a number of years. It is also a free program, IrfanView. This little utility has been around since the days of Win-

(Continued on page 10)
**Review: SanDisk Ultra Dual USB Drive**

*Android file transfers made easy*

By Frank Ramsey, Editor, Akron Canton PC Users Group (ACPCUG), Ohio  
www.acpcug.org  
Aframsey(at)yahoo.com

Your first question is probably what is a dual USB drive and why might it be useful?

In this context, a dual USB drive is a device that has two USB connectors. In the case of the SanDisk Ultra, as shown in the picture, it has a standard USB type A male and a standard micro USB male connector. The connections are not to be used at the same time.

There are covers that slide over the connectors, protecting them. Since the covers are attached to the device itself, you cannot lose the cover. Best Buy has them in sizes of 16GB, 32GB and 64GB, priced around $15, $25 and $50 respectively.

Yes, you could use an OTG (on the go) cable and a standard USB device with a USB type A male connector. I personally guarantee that no matter how many OTG cables you have, there will be a time when you need it that you cannot find it. Not the case with this device. The two connectors are always attached to the device.

To use, slide the cover back on the connector to use and plug in the device.

Android and PC devices will typically recognize the device as external storage.

When is the device useful? When you want to backup stuff on an Android device, or transferring large amounts to/from the Android device. Think of the picture library on your Smartphone. Have you protected it? What would happen if you drop the phone into the sink? Are your pictures gone?

Not if you use this device. Plug it into the smartphone. Using your favorite file manager, select the picture library (typically contained in a folder called DCIM). Click copy. From within the file manager, browse to the SanDisk dual USB device, typically called USBDriveA (or B or C). Select the device. Click, paste and wait until the picture library has been copied.

Now, unplug the SanDisk dual USB device from your Smartphone and plug it into your PC, copying the picture library to your PC, the Cloud, or an external USB device attached to your PC. The possibilities are endless.

Great device. Highly recommended.

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**From the Presidents,**

…….. Editor’s desk

**Required reading:**  *Always good reading available here ……..*

- **IoTMT (Internet of Too Many Things)**  
  …….. by Greg Skalka  
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- **Open Source Lab - KGeography**  
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- **Image Processing Software, Part 3**  
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- **The Mac Corner – June 2014, July 2014**  
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- **Music and Video Files: Modify Them to Your Needs**  
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  Android file transfers made easy .. by Frank Ramsey  
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**PJK**

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(Continued from page 9)

IrfanView gives you the choice of horizontal or vertical merging of photos. You add the photos you want, rearrange their order and then hit the Create key. Save the resulting photo-merge, give it a name and you are good to go. You could even resize the final image if it is too big or too small for your application.

So what about merging photos of different pixel size or resolution. No problem. I ran a few tests where the height dimensions were five times different. IrfanView makes the horizontal photo montage' a constant height. The same thing occurred when merging photos of very different resolution. Again, the merged photos were a nearly constant total pixel size. The overall picture quality has been reduced substantially, but who cares when it is being viewed over the Internet.

IrfanView is the product of Irfan Skiljan, who lists himself as graduate of Vienna University. Be sure to get the latest version which is 4.37 as of this writing.
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<th>COMPUTER AREA</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agrawala, Vishnu</td>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>724-553-8051</td>
<td>3 - 6:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutrara, Phil</td>
<td>Geoworks</td>
<td>766-0274</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher, Bill</td>
<td>Cobol, Word Perfect</td>
<td>367-8996</td>
<td>7 - 9:00 pm</td>
</tr>
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<td>Windows, DOS 6.2x, MS IE, Hardware</td>
<td>795-6075</td>
<td>8 - 9:00 pm</td>
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</tbody>
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