

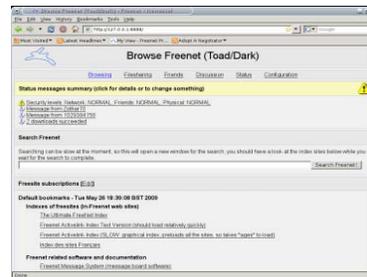
# PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

November 2009

## MEETING SCHEDULE Sunday, November 15, 2009

- |                                |  |         |
|--------------------------------|--|---------|
| 11:00 - 11:25 am<br>ROOM # 311 | Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers, Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings |         |
| 11:00 - 11:25 pm<br>ROOM # 301 | PACC BOD Meeting   |         |
| 11:35 - 12:00 pm<br>ROOM # 301 | Windows New Users<br>Can we help you? V. Agrawala  |         |
| 12:00 - 12:30 pm<br>ROOM # 301 | General Meeting, Raffle.   | (pg. 1) |
| 12:35 - 2:00 pm<br>ROOM # 301  | Fences, Astroburn Lite, FavBackup 2.0.0  | (pg. 1) |
| 2:05 - 3:30 pm<br>ROOM # 301   | More utilities - Past months reviews.  | (pg. 1) |
| 2:05 - 3:30 pm<br>ROOM # 311   | Hardware SIG<br>Users Helping Users - guests included  |         |
| 1:00 - 3:30 pm<br>ROOM # 311   | Linux SIG, Members Helping Members,<br>Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange   |         |
| 3:30 - 4:00 pm                 | Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close   |         |



"Freenet is free software which lets you anonymously share files, browse and publish "freesites" (web sites accessible only through Freenet) and chat on forums, without fear of censorship. Freenet is decentralised to make it less vulnerable to attack, and if used in "darknet" mode, where users only connect to their friends, is

very difficult to detect!" 8 MB download, get it here:  
<http://freenet.googlecode.com/files/FreenetInstaller-1239.exe>

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### Windows SIG

I like Icons on the desktop. They are the ultimate shortcuts. But.. There are some folks who do not like the clutter and for those folks there are Fences. So go to the download site at:

[www.stardock.com/products/fences](http://www.stardock.com/products/fences)  
and download the Fences. Only a 8,845 KB download.

From the web site:

**"Fences**

Fences is a program that helps you organize your desktop, and can

hide your icons when they're not in use. It's FREE for personal use, so try it out today, and change how you use your desktop forever! .....

Fences is a one-of-a-kind program, allowing you to draw labeled shaded areas on your desktop, which become movable & resizable containers for your desktop icons. These groups can help bring organization and consistency to your computer's desktop, solving the "constant mess" problem that has plagued the desktop since its inception. "



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### Astroburn Lite - free

Easy to use d burner, read it on their web site:

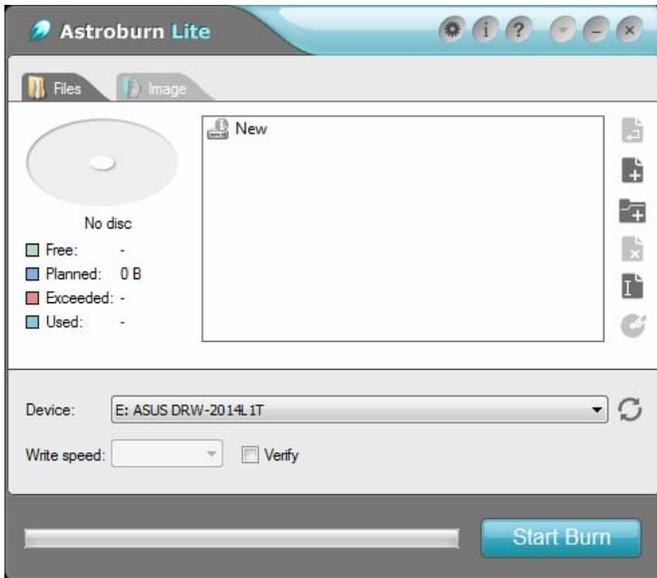


“The best choice for those who want to have quick and easy-to-use home program with essential features to perform disc burning.

- A. Insert a disc into your drive;
- B. Select data or an image file;
- C. Start burn.

You can also personalize your Astroburn Lite — just select a skin for program interface you like the most. Burning CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays was never that simple!” 5,103 KB download, get it from here:

<http://www.astroburn.com/>



### FavBackup 2.0.0



From the web site:

“FavBackup is a simple solution for you to backup and restore web browser settings and other data on Windows 7/Vista/XP/2000 systems. No installation required. Don’t forget to check our [help](#) section.” Go to <http://www.favbrowser.com/help/>

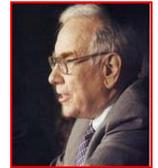
The 1.97 MB download is at:

<http://www.favbrowser.com/favbackup.zip>

the end of the story

## Dufferdom

### Tales from the Kingdom of the Ordinary User Of Kicks and Kudos



Written by David D. Uffer, a member of the Chicago Computer Society, Illinois  
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There come times in users’ lives when they want to let some experiences out to be shared with others more-or less-fortunate. The intent would be to shepherd toward or warn against having similar experiences. Sort of like a personal *Consumer Reports*. It may be that other users have similar feelings of wanting to share desires, expectations, and outcomes, to share them here for the benefit of other CCS members.

If so, it may be that I can persuade the editors of Hard-Copy to collect and publish honest accounts from time to time, accounts with sufficient detail to be verified. If you have joyful or woeful experiences, not opinions, to pass along here, send e-mail accounts to Beata Kernan at [admin1@ccs.org](mailto:admin1@ccs.org) <<mailto:admin1@ccs.org>> for her to transmit to me. Be sure to start the Subject line with “OKK”, from the title above. Remember that she is a sensitive lady of fine breeding who would be put off by raucous or violent comment.

### Hail to Nuance, makers of OmniScan

That’s hall as in hailstorms or hail stones. Maybe kick some gravel their way too. I have recently come from repeated attempts to exercise my gullibility. I am mature enough to recall when optical character recognition was a wonder to behold. One could scan a document—even with an early scanner—and pass the image to one of several OCR programs of the era, each advertising an accuracy rate above 85%. Rates rose and OCR programs dwindled. *OmniScan* swallowed its major competitor becoming preminent, outstanding in the field. (Gets wet when it rains.)

It is now in Version 17, claiming another step, just short of perfection and ever more options in access and usage. I was hooked again, hoping this upgrade would solve the non-workability problems of my current version. Though many sources are now digital, there are still times when it would be useful to convert text and graphics on paper to digital media. So I tried to order it, first by e-,mail, then by phone.

My e-mail responses to their special offer were stymied at the final ordering stage by their repeated untrue judgements of false information from me. Repeated attempts to order by phone reached only the famous “All of our representatives are busy...” routine. Exactly the same for Ordering, Customer Service, and Support. Then at the end of their semi-hidden Contact Us option, their Submit command failed to send. I caught on. I was to submit to their impenetrability, unavailable.

I recalled having similar problems seeking their Support for my current version, then giving up. I’d surmise that their staff, if any, is not available to the public (maybe soggy from the rain). Their strengths, if any, must lie elsewhere, probably in advertising. The phrase, “A

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plague upon them” comes to my mind.

### **A Couple kudos to Epson for their Stylus CX7000F**

I got this printer-copier-scanner-fax machine to save footprint space and on the sincere, personal recommendation of a salesman at Micro Center, who had recently bought his own and was happy with it. It worked well and reliably for some months, sipping its costly ink cartridges like martinis. It was clearly designed for younger eyes, able to catch its status messages zipping across its narrow display. Older eyes were consigned to trek through its ample manual. Finally it developed misfeeds and balky behavior, neither covered in the manual nor explainable by their ever-helpful support team, located offshore in the Philippines. On that final, clear call, clear over to Manila, when the young tech rep was no longer able to find assistance in Epson’s extensive knowledge base, he set in motion a process which very soon delivered a new CX7000F with instructions on returning the faulty one—all for free. A pleasant surprise. I credit Epson for a pretty good machine and wonderful tech support.

### **Kudos to Canon for their MX850 All-in-One**

Canon seems to do well across the board in the ratings games. It’s a dependable choice. My MX850 printer-copier-scanner-fax machine does it all, well, and fast. It has two paper magazines: the usual one angled in back and a second horizontal holder secreted beneath, which can handle two-sided printing. Its 1.5 x 2 inch display is stable, readable, and presents extensive options and instructions so one needs less to read its online manual.

The Canon has five ink cartridges, the usual three colors and a black, all rather small, plus one larger black since most of users’ printing is black. Initial hooking up is well-explained and Canon uses instruction sets which are already provided in Windows XP and probably in Vista, for those who tread there; they are also supplied for other operating systems, including Apple’s, in a furnished CD.

And then one day, one dreary day as I was struggling with the subtle obscurities of sending faxes with *WinFax Pro* [and I drop a kick their way too, for non-ease of use], I resumed an aborted attempt to send a test fax and found I was then treading upon an ongoing voice call from elsewhere in the house, a threat to domestic bliss. In panic, my fingers wandered idly over the groups of keys, much as in Sir Arthur Sullivan’s immortal song, “The Lost Chord”. Nothing stopped the beeping nor would turn it off. But that was it: I pulled the last cord.

Then my marvelous MX850 misbehaved. After a series of off-ons, it settled into a state of reluctant, initially cooperative starts, always turning in less than a minute from any other mode - printer, copier, scanner - into the fax mode, then stalled after a jump and a hiccup. I tried to live with it for awhile by doing starts and quick printing or copying. Unaware that the 1-year warranty was approaching, then at expiration, I gave up and called Canon.

The live tech support rep, ever gracious, speaking perfect English, and located in a large support facility in Virginia, diagnosed the problem as corrupted memory in the MX850, which was beyond telephonic repair. So he immediately generated an express shipment, free both directions, of an exchange replacement. Upon its arrival, another tech support rep exercised monumental patience and walked me through reinstallation of the machine and its accessories - and as I crawled along the floor, tracing cables and checking proper connections.

My MX850 is once again a marvelous all-in-one, though it still has an appetite for new ink cartridges and displays gentle reminders on my

monitor of their current status as their need develops. One of the English definitions of (small “c”) “canon” is an accepted principle or rule. From my experience and for me, the capitalized term carries the reputation of highly rated products backed by enviably impressive support. Though it sounds like a commercial, to me, Canon rules. As does the customer. So it should be.

*David Uffer is a long standing CCS member with decades of fringe contact with computers, closer as they got smaller. From time to time he recounts his PC experiences here. He occasionally attends CCS meetings when he can, admiring their content and availability. He is shy about e-mail but can be reached indirectly via Beata Kernan at admin1@ccs.org, using “Dufferdom” in the Subject line. ■*

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the end of the story

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## **Social Networking - What is it, really?**

**Written by Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida**  
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Social Networking is all over the news; Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are the ones that get the most play. So what are they, really? Well, they’re websites that provide another way of keeping in touch with friends, family, and associates. What are some older social networking methods? Maybe, the Telegram, the Telephone, Visiting on Sunday, Writing Letters. These are all ways of keeping in touch with your family and/or circle of friends. Yesterday we had these less technical ways of keeping in touch. Today we have the computer to help us keep in touch via email, instant messaging, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone, and social networking. Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people, and it now seems that social networking will become a regular part of everyday computer life.

Social Networking is probably the newest technology and revolves around an internet website that provides social networking services. How about this for a definition of a social network: A site that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; to create a list of other users with whom they have a connection; and to view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. With that in mind, a social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging.

On many of the large Social Networking sites, participants are not necessarily “networking” or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network, such as on Facebook and Twitter.

While it could be said that email and regular websites have most of the essential elements of social networks, the social networking sites make it easy to use. Here’s a look at some of the more popular sites.

(Continued on page 4)

## Windows 7 is Here! Part I

Written by Robert Nisbet,  
a member of the Asbury Computer Club, MD  
[www.amvresidents.org/computerclub](http://www.amvresidents.org/computerclub)  
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This first article will answer several basic questions about Windows 7. Future articles will cover aspects of the operating system of interest to most users.

Q: What is Windows 7?

A: Windows 7 is the next generation of operating system for PCs from Microsoft. It will replace Windows Vista - and Windows XP as it is phased out.

Q: Is Windows 7 the official name?

A: Yes. Microsoft considers this version the seventh version of Windows and has dropped the "fancy" (i.e. XP, Vista) names for now.

Q: Is Windows 7 a major change from Windows Vista?

A: Not relative to what you see, though there are some nice new user features which are addressed in future installments. Many improvements are "under the hood." Some pundits have characterized Windows 7 as "Windows Vista the way it should have been."

Q: I have a Windows Vista computer. Can I upgrade to Windows 7?

A: Yes. The upgrade will be easy and preserve all your files and settings. All your hardware that works with Windows Vista will work with Windows 7.

Q: I have a Windows XP computer. Can I upgrade to Windows 7.

A: Possibly, but... This is not so easy. You first have to make sure your computer will run Windows 7. Then, you have to decide if it is worth it. You will have to save all your data files and then reformat your hard drive and start all over with the Windows 7 installation.

The next installment will cover how to get Windows 7 and the upgrade process for various users in more detail.

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LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) <<http://www.linkedin.com>>)

LinkedIn is mostly for business people and professionals. People use it to maintain contacts and to develop new business opportunities. To

(Continued on page 5)

## Windows 7 is Here! Part II

Written by Robert Nisbet,  
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Getting Windows 7

There will be both upgrade and full editions of Windows 7. The  
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version that will be available for U.S. use is Windows 7 Home Premium. There will be no "Basic" version of Windows 7 as there was for Vista. The upgrade version will cost about \$120 and the full version will cost about \$200. Most people will be obtaining the upgrade version, if bought in a store. If you buy a new computer between now and October 22, you receive a voucher from the manufacturer for a free upgrade to Windows 7 when it is available. You will have to install the upgrade yourself or obtain assistance. If you buy a new computer after October 22, your new computer will come with Windows 7 Home Premium already installed. It pays to wait if you can.

Upgrading from Windows Vista

If you are a Windows Vista user now and are contemplating upgrading to Windows 7 (I do recommend it), you should download and run the Microsoft Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor (Beta) utility. It will tell you if your computer hardware meets the minimum requirements for running Windows 7 and will identify anything that needs to be uninstalled or upgraded before the upgrade. It is available for download at Web address: [tinyurl.com/mmmj8u](http://tinyurl.com/mmmj8u). The Advisor is simple to use and will give you a printed report. Be aware you must have a DVD drive on your computer and not just a CD drive to install the upgrade. Windows 7 only comes on DVD discs.

Upgrading from Windows XP

If you are a Windows XP user, you must now have a "high-end" computer to meet the minimum hardware requirements for Windows 7. If you bought an "inexpensive" XP computer originally, forget about upgrading. If you do upgrade you will have to do a "clean" installation where all your existing files are erased before installation. You will need to back-up all your data files prior to starting and reinstall all your applications afterward. All your peripherals (printer, scanner, etc.) will require new "driver" software, if they are not too old. The Windows 7 disc comes with many drivers on it. Usually, a new computer is by far the best route for XP users.

Will I have trouble learning to use Windows 7?

If you are a Vista user now, you should catch on to Windows 7 easily. They look very similar. There are some new features, which I will start covering in the next article. If you are a Windows XP user and buy a new Windows 7 computer, you will notice some differences on the Start menu and when you view and work in folder windows. However, Windows is still Windows and most things work essentially the same.

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use LinkedIn, you create a profile where you describe yourself, listing work and education history, skills, specialties, etc. Just like a resume. Once you have your profile, you start connecting to others. That's the driving force behind LinkedIn. You use your connections to promote yourself and build relationships.

Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) <<http://www.twitter.com>>)

Twitter is a micro blogging service. When it started out, people used it to tell others what they were doing at various times during the day. Now it has evolved into a way to tell people about your activities and then provide a link to further details. SPCUG as a group could have its own Twitter account. Once we had it, interested members could "follow" it and receive our group information known as "tweets" delivered to them. A Twitter "tweet" has a limit of 140 characters. This may possibly be a substitute for our use of Constant Contact to contact the membership for changes in educational class schedules.

Facebook ([www.backbook.com](http://www.backbook.com)).

Facebook <<http://www.backbook.com>>. Facebook is sort of a cross between LinkedIn and Twitter. Facebook used to be mainly for students, but has become more mainstream. Like LinkedIn, you build a profile of yourself, where you talk about what your interests and hobbies are. Like Twitter, you can do micro blogging about things you want people to know. In Facebook, you have friends as opposed to connections or followers.

Users of Social Networks, in general, can upload a picture of themselves, create their "profile" and can often be "friends" with other users. In most social networks, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice's friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a "favorites" feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networks usually have privacy controls that allow the user to choose who can view their profile or contact them, etc.

Privacy of Social Networks is a big concern. On large social networks, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these networks need to be aware of data theft and viruses. However, large networks often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents.

Access to one's information is also of great concern. Many social networks such as Facebook, provide the user the choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized user(s) from accessing their information. To edit information on a social network account, the site usually requires you to login or provide an access code. This prevents unauthorized users from editing an account such as posting pictures or changing personal information.

Social Networking is a promising new technology for staying in touch. Give it a try, there must be some group of people you would like to keep in touch with.



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the end of the story

## The Computer as Crime Scene

Written by Michael Gemignani, a member of HAL-PC, Texas  
HAL-PC Magazine, July 2009  
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When most folks think of criminal activity, the computer is not the first thing that comes to mind.

But computers are arguably one of the most powerful instruments of crime in history. A poor sucker who robs a bank may get a few thousand dollars. He will almost invariably be caught and may wind up spending decades in jail. But a cybercriminal who causes billions of dollars in damage (witness the conficker worm), or who manages to steal millions of dollars electronically, may not even get caught and, if caught, is not liable to spend a much time in prison as the low tech robber. Computers offer the opportunity for theft and vandalism on an unprecedented scale. Some feel that the next world war may not be fought by soldiers with guns and bombs but by hackers who try to destroy a nation's power, utility, economic and communication capabilities

However, we do not have to think in terms of grandiose acts or international plots for a computer to be associated with criminal activity. The fact is that even seemingly innocent activity can get a user in trouble with the law.

Suppose, for example, that pornography, or worse, child pornography, was found on your computer. Many companies will fire an employee if they find pornography on a computer that the employee uses at, or for, work. If child pornography is found, the computer user is subject to harsh criminal penalties. But one need not even download pictures to be subject to prosecution.

The relevant federal statutes are sections 2252A and 2256 et seq. of chapter 110 of Part I of Title 18, which is the United States Criminal Code. Child pornography basically involves the depiction of someone under age 18 engaging in sexually explicit activity. It is not required that someone actually have downloaded child pornography. The law applies if someone attempts to violate the provisions against possessing child pornography. Thus, if the FBI were to establish a decoy website that purports to provide child pornography, as some allege has already happened, someone clicking on the website could trigger an investigation and possible prosecution. Lest you think such language is overly broad and therefore unconstitutional, be aware that the Supreme Court of the United States has already ruled the statutes to be constitutional in their entirety as written.

I am not by any means defending the loathsome trade in child pornography. Nor do I seek to defend those who deliberately seek out child pornography. However, as is well-known to those who do not exercise appropriate caution, malware can play all sorts of tricks on a computer, including downloading images that the user would ordinarily avoid completely, usually without the user's knowledge. If a worker is provided a computer by his or her employer, the computer may already have illicit files stored on the hard drive and the new user may be none the wiser.

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What of it, you might ask? Surely the police would understand that it was not the current user but, rather, the previous user or malicious software that downloaded the illegal files. But suppose such files were found on your own computer. How would you prove that you were not the one who downloaded them? If child pornography were found on your hard drive, how could you convince someone that you were not the one who put it there? Indeed, if someone at work wanted to get you fired and the person had the requisite expertise, he could put incriminating files on your hard drive and then let it be known to your superiors that he had observed you downloading pornography on the job.

The saving grace in all this, if there is one, is that one is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Hence you would not be required to prove that you did not download the files. Rather, the police would be required to prove that you did, and this might be quite difficult, particularly if your computer were found to be riddled with malware, or it could be shown that someone had hacked into your machine, or that your machine had been used by others.

Even if the charges were dropped, or never even filed, because they could not prove that you downloaded the illicit files or even knew about them, you would still suffer unimaginable emotional trauma, legal expenses, and the probable loss of your job. Moreover, the failure to prosecute would not be the same as exoneration. You would still be under the cloud of having the material found on your machine. Mere pornography can get you fired. Child pornography can get you five to twenty years in prison.

Detective stories often feature someone poisoning another's food or attempts to frame someone for a crime. Now we have the added possibility of poisoned computers destroying lives or being used to frame others for crimes they did not commit. Hope it does not happen to you.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Gemignani, an attorney and Episcopal priest, is also a former professor of computer science who has written extensively on legal issues related to computers. Although he is now retired, he enjoys writing and speaking about computer law and security.

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*the end of the story*

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**Install Those Updates**  
**By Marjie Tucker, Newsletter Editor,**  
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Are you taking every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer "yes" because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that's great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don't install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your taskbar that reads "Updates are ready for your computer." If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

#### ***There May Be Additional Updates***

Sometimes there are optional updates available that won't be downloaded automatically. For that reason it's a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don't want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer's software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that are missing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software, Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver updates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs location on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled "Show Updates." Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

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**From The DealsGuy**  
 by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click  
 Greater Orlando Computer Users Group  
 December 2009

People I've seen since releasing the November column commented on my vacation, but missed that some pictures of Port Huron, Michigan's Boat night would be on my Web site.

You can check for the pictures and descriptions:  
 <[http://www.dealsguy.com/Boatnight\\_Images.html](http://www.dealsguy.com/Boatnight_Images.html)>

I was surprised to hear from as many readers as I did about the GM bankruptcy thing. I was unaware that so many of my readers were also affected. Good luck to us all. I wonder why most of the people that ran GM into the ground are still running it, with our money. I hear people complaining about the unions, but their pay cuts didn't make the news. Many GM workers took pay cuts, some as much as 50%. That must have hurt, although some people feel that even workers at a 7/11 make too much money. Salaried workers involuntarily took health care cuts long before the union people had to. Where I worked in Michigan is pretty much a ghost town now where former GM plants are now fields of weeds. When I hired into my GM plant, I was overwhelmed by the size of the plant (eight blocks long and four blocks wide) where over 7,000 people worked in 1950. Buick City was much larger, but it's also gone.

**Recreation Time**

My wife and I took a bargain cruise in September with two other couples and found that corporate cutbacks have also invaded the cruise industry. At least that's what we were told when we asked crewmembers, or customer service, questions. Customer service urged us to e-mail our concerns to the corporate Web site. Our ship was the Freedom of the Seas, a Royal Caribbean beauty. It can carry about 4,300 passengers and has 1,400 crewmembers. Last December (2008), we cruised on the Mariner of the Seas (also Royal Caribbean) and it's slightly smaller than this one, but they are both large. There are no more free gifts for "Crown & Anchor" members (people with multiple cruises on RC). We did get coupon books, but discounts in them don't amount to much.

We weren't the only ones who noticed that portions at dinner are now smaller, although I have no problem with that. The buffet was only



complete in the morning. For the luncheon buffet, half of the area was cordoned off, but the selection was still good. We never went to the evening buffet so we don't know about that one. Servers told us that with part of the area cordoned off, there was less food that had to be thrown away. Everybody did get whatever food they wanted. We noticed a few other cuts, but we still enjoyed the cruise. Of course, some of these policies could actually be "that ship's" policy. The cruise in December on the Mariner of the Seas was better, but it's been moved to Las Angeles and the Freedom is taking its place out of Port Canaveral. Corporate cuts probably took place since we took the cruise on the Mariner.

The Freedom of the Seas is about 1,100 ft. long and 126.64 ft. wide; and is much too large for the Panama Canal. As I said, we had a fun cruise, but it is often crowded in certain places. The evening shows were great and one person in our group managed to get us tickets to a show at the ice rink, and that was also a spectacular show.

We think our next cruise will be on a smaller ship. There seems to be some great cruise bargains available these days. How about \$399 for a 7-day cruise on a Holland America ship! Also, Norwegian Cruise Lines, which I have never tried, called to offer us a five day cruise at \$129, but we weren't quite ready for their fast approaching open dates. We did sign up for the Florida Association of PC Users Groups spring conference, which will be held on a three day cruise next spring. Registration for it has been great and it seems to be well received.

Enough about our fun (which is destroying our savings); here's a few things that might be of interest to you.

**Just the Ticket For Dark Restaurants**

If you haven't seen (or heard) them, you'd be impressed with "Talking Menus." I saw them at a food show some time ago, but haven't been to a restaurant that uses them. I've been to a few restaurants with a dark ambience and tried everything to see what was on the menu. These talking menus would be the answer, and according to the brochure, they can also tell you the nutritional facts if you are interested. Look them over at <<http://www.talkingmenus.com>>.

I could have asked them for a discount, but I doubt your budget would have tolerated a \$399 menu for your dinner table at home (from the prices in the booklet they gave me), and I doubt the cook offers multiple selections to choose from. Ask your favorite restaurant if they'll be getting them soon. We don't frequent the dark places much and our favorites, the fast-food places, don't need them. However, my wife has to read the menus behind the counter to me because the print is too small. Have you noticed that on their dollar menus?

**Tool For Repairing Access Files**

I ran this product back in March, but if you missed it at that time, DataNumen is now offering a 20% discount by using the coupon code DATA-E2OI-TWEN when ordering at

<<http://www.datanumen.com/aar/order.htm>>.

This is a better deal than the discount last March which was only 10%. The discount code may also work for ordering their products for repairing Excel and Word; and for the Outlook and Outlook Express files. Check their Web site for descriptions of the products. The version for Access is 2.1, updated from the one in March.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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### How's Your Battery Doing?

Hewie Poplock of Central Florida Computer Society <<http://www.cfc.org>> mentioned this product to the members of his SIG (Special Interest Group) and it sounded to me like something that my readers might be interested in, considering the proliferation of laptop use these days. According to their product page, "BatteryCare is a free utility that gives you much more information about your battery than how much charge you have left for the current session: The app changes power profiles for you when you connect your laptop to a power source, lets you know how many recharge cycles your battery has left, and more, all for free." I know my laptop is not accurate about its remaining time, but I have not used it very much while depending entirely on its battery.

It sounds like a handy product, and how could you go wrong if it's free. However, the developer does appreciate any donations to help keep his work going. Makes sense to me.

<<http://batteryCare.bkspot.com/en/index.html>>

### Having problems reading the screen?

A while back, I read a review of DeskTopZoom written by Bonnie Snyder in Bits of Bytes, newsletter of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society of Colorado Springs

<<http://ppcompas.apcug.org/bb0903.pdf#page=5>>.

This product does a good job of giving you options for enlarging parts of your screen for easier reading, or to study something you can't see very well on a page. It does have a few shortcomings, but all in all, she speaks highly of it, and the price is "nada." If you would like to find out more, read her article in the above link, or go to <<http://www.softpedia.com/get/Desktop-Enhancements/Other-Desktop-Enhancements/DesktopZoom.shtml>>. There may be improvements since her review was written.

### Magnifier You May Already Have!

Let's say that you sometimes need simple magnification for something. Like me, you may not have known about the screen magnifier in XP. It's nothing exciting, but simply click "All Programs, then Accessories, then click Accessibility" and you'll find Magnifier. I tried it and it's pretty basic, but I'm told that more information about it is on the Microsoft Web site. The article I read said there's a link for that, but I didn't see it. On my screen, large text appeared at the top with a large cursor, and while there wasn't much magnified screen area, I was able to make use of it. Try it; it may be all you need. Clicking "exit" stops it. I was unaware of this gem until I read it in a newsletter.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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 Cheap skate) Click  
<[bobclick@bellsouth.net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>.

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the end of the story



## From the Editors desk



### Hi PACCsters!

I am still not allowed to drive so it is unlikely I will attend the next PACC meeting on November 15, 2009. I might see you in the December PACC Meeting. I hope. And yes!... Read the articles!

PJK

**Do you want to see something new from O'Reilly?**

**O'ReillyAnswers is in beta but worth visiting already, go here:**

<http://post.oreilly.com/rd/9z1z4epieted2le5gjm5q8ratnq20cdkr6fhouv9bg0>

**Please change your address of PACC Web site to the following URL:**  
<http://pacc.apcug.org>

(Continued from page 6)

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

### Don't Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs

Of course, it's also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these programs for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don't miss any patches or new program features.

### And, Remember Your Other Software

We've spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be as simple as installing the latest patch.

### Apple Software Updates

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.

### Stay Secure

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data.

the end of the story

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*cut here.....cut here*

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Help is available to PACC members on various computer topics by contacting one of those listed below. It is recommended that the initial contact with any of these experts should be made via the PACC WEB SITE. In this way others can benefit from the questions and responses. Be courteous and call only during the listed times.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COMPUTER AREA</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Agrawala, Vishnu	Hardware	724-553-8051	3 - 6:00 pm
Cutrara, Phil	Geoworks	766-0274	
Fisher, Bill	Cobol, Word Perfect	367-8996	7 - 9:00 pm
Konecny, P.	Windows, DOS 6.2x, MS IE., Hardware	795-6075	8 - 9:00 pm

If you would like to become PACC HELP LINE volunteer inform the editor by sending e-mail to: [pacccomm@aol.com](mailto:pacccomm@aol.com)



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## NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON NOVEMBER 15, 2009

PACC 1975 - 2009  
IN ITS THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR



# PACC TALK

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***NEXT MEETING: November 15, 2009***

The Pittsburgh Area Computer Club (PACC) holds its meetings the **THIRD** Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be in room 311 at **Point Park University**, Wood St. and Blvd. of the Allies. The doors open at 11:00 am and close at 4:30 pm. Bring your PC!  
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**Classified ads.** Buy, Sell, Trade. Members may place free ads (up to 5 lines). Articles should be prepared in plain ASCII text. **WITHOUT** formatting. Deadline for articles is the 25th of the month. Send them to P.J. Konecny, P.O. Box 557, Monroeville, PA 15146.  
PACC homepage can be found at: <http://pacc.apcug.org>

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