The Cursor

Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer Users Group

Meeting Location:
Fairfax County
Government Center

apcug
Member of

Next Meeting:
September 17, 2005

Presidential Bits

By Paul Howard

At August's meeting, WAC members and guests learned about the convergence of personal computers with various kinds of audio and visual entertainment digital technology. We've come a long way from spreadsheets and word processing, the original "killer apps" of personal computing.

We're hoping to have a unique presentation for September's meeting, scheduled for Saturday, September 17th in the Fairfax County Government Center. We've invited a representative of the county's Geographical Information System department to our meeting. We expect to see a presentation about how this application of computer based mapping technology helps county agencies provide better services to the more than one million residents of Fairfax County.

Following the GIS presentation, Bill Walsh, WAC's director of meeting services, will introduce the group to several programs he's found that enhance the use of PC systems. Route 1 Pro is a "button bar" replacing or enhancing the standard Windows interface, providing access to applications, documents, and information at the single touch of a button.

The program provides quick, easy access to your programs and files, and includes a powerful scripting language, complete with full documentation, allowing you to consolidate tedious operations into a single click. http://www.creativelement. com/route1pro/

Bill will also discuss another useful program from Funduc Software. Application Mover is a tool that relocates installed programs from one path to another on your hard disk. Application Mover takes files found in the path specified in the 'Current Path' field (see below) and moves them to the 'New Path' path. Application Mover scans the windows registry for references to files located in the 'Current' field and changes those references to the 'New' path. Application Mover also scans all windows shortcuts in the Start Menu and adjusts path references to the new program location. http://www.funduc.com/app_mover.htm

Cursor editor Chuck Roberts will demonstrate FileLocator Pro, a utility program that allows you

Lu Spriggs Web Sites for September 2005

by Lu Spriggs
WAC Member, Internet Support

http://www.wacug.org/ is the URL for the Washington Area Computer User Group. Visit it for past versions of Spriggs Web Sites with hyperlinks.

Following are (5) popular photo-sharing sites, where you can upload your photos to share with others, or order prints for yourself. Prices are shown for a single 4-by-6 print for comparison purposes. Other sizes are not proportionally priced.

1. http://www.kodakgallery.com/ – At the Kodak Easy Share Gallery, (1) 4-by-6 print costs 25¢.

2. http://www.shutterfly.com/ – (1) 4-by-6 print costs 29¢ at Shutterfly.

3. http://www.snapfish.com/ – (1) 4-by-6 print costs 12¢ at Snapfish.

4. http://www.webshots.com/ – (1) 4-by-6 print costs 24¢ at Webshots.

5. http://www.photos.yahoo.com/ – (1) 4-by-6 print costs 19¢ at Yahoo.

6. http://www.flickr.com/ – You can tour Flickr's photo library of millions of photos by specifying the desirable photo characteristics.

How you can Save Money by Spending it!

7. http://www.dollarstretcher.com/ – Gary Foreman: "Spending money on simple and inexpensive household items can save you hundreds of dollars a year in heating and energy bills."

8. http://www.savingadvice.com/ – Jeffrey Strain: "There are things that will definitely pay you in the long run to purchase." For example: Low Flow Shower Head, Water filters, Energy saving light bulbs, ceiling fan.

9. http://pctools.com/Spyware-Doctor – Free, download sdinst.exe, 4.2 mb, for protection against spyware, key-stroke logger, and other malware. Five (5) star rating by PC Magazine. $29.95 to register for live updates. *Please note the trial version is limited to scan only*

PFISHING* Anyone? (A form of Identity Theft)

Pfishing involves the use of a bogus Site, that is designed to appear as a legitimate Site. It is intended to obtain your personal information: password, social security number and etc. with the intent of stealing your fiancial data: banking, credit card information. The new edition of the Oxford English Dictionary has added "phishing".

10. http://www.antiphishing.org/ – Visit this site for more info. Its archive of phishing reports is: www.antiphishing.org/phishing_archive.html.

11. http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/phishingalrt.htm – Consumer Alert by Federal Trade Commission "How Not to Get Hooked by a 'Pfishing Scam".

☺

NCTCUG

Visit our "sister" user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User's Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4th Street.Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

http://www.nctcug.org/

Meetings begin at 7:00 PM

Special Offer!!

WAC Members Only Special offer on Windows Disk of the Month CD's.
All CD's of the month from 2004 and earlier are available for $1 per CD.
Once they're gone, they're gone so plan to get yours at the next meeting!!

GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum

Do It Yourself Laser Printer Repair

As I was printing membership forms on my laser printer before the June WAC meeting, I noticed the pages had black marks up one side of the page. I didn't have time to diagnose the problem, but I thought that some toner had dirtied the paper path and a simple cleaning would fix it. When I got home, I took a closer look and discovered that a rubber roller that helps pull the paper through the printer was completely deformed. The rubber had become tacky and parts of it were actually coming off on the paper. I knew from work experience that many companies sell replacement parts for laser printers (particularly Hewlett Packard models), so I searched with Google and eBay.

On eBay (http://www.ebay.com/), I found a company by the name of Laserprinterkits that sells parts replacement kits for HP laser printers including a CD of step-by-step video instructions. The company is operated by Rick Lord (eBay ID ricks66gs), who has over 1,000 positive feedback comments from customer transactions over the previous year, no negative comments and one

neutral. The kits for my HP Laserjet 6MP ranged from the $19.95 Fuser Repair Kit to the $44.95 Ultimate Rebuild Kit. While the Fuser Repair Kit included the roller that I needed, I decided to purchase the five piece HP 5P/6P/5MP/6MP Deluxe Roller Repair Kit for $34.95 so I could replace all of the parts subject to wear and tear at the same time. In my case, it was also important to note the specific HP model (6MP), as one of the replacement gears in the kit is model dependent. Shipping by USPS Priority Mail added $5.50 to the price. I made payment through PayPal.

I received the order a few days later. The CD contained several numbered video files in AVI format and documentation files. As advised by the instructions, I viewed all of the video files (with mplayer under Linux) in sequence before beginning work on the printer. This was good advice as it avoids unnecessary backtracking later. The videos are amateur productions, with the technician working on the printer while it sits on a sheet of cardboard on the kitchen table. However, this is effective as it is probably similar to the way the customer will work. Each video segment only lasts a few minutes, covering one part of the printer repair process. The videos are easily paused or played again while performing the task (though you must have your computer near your printer repair area). Only a few basic tools are required (the most exotic being a Torx screwdriver), and the video makes it clear what to do in what order. When I was done, I had replaced all of the rollers and gears in my printer with new parts and the printer was working perfectly.

All in all, I found this repair kit to

be a great bargain – much cheaper than a commercial repair or replacement. I also learned how to completely disassemble and reassemble my printer through the video instructions, which are available for reference whenever needed.

While the company can be found through eBay, you can also find it online at http://laserprinterkits.com/.

Free Credit Reports

As of September 1, everyone in the US is entitled under Federal law to request a free credit disclosure report once per year from each of three credit reporting companies: Experian; Equifax; and TransUnion. Reviewing your credit report periodically can help you detect incidents of identity theft. While reports from all three companies can be requested simultaneously, requesting a single report every four months from a different company may help detect identity theft more quickly. The reports can be requested by phone (1-877-322-8228), US mail or through the web site at http://www.annualcreditreport.com/.

This service should not be confused with subscription credit tracking services such as Freecreditreport.com, which provide a free credit report during a trial period, followed by a monthly fee for continued tracking of credit report activity.

APCUG Annual Conference and CES

Registration is now open for the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) Annual Conference, to be held from Monday, January 2 through Thursday,

January 5 at the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. All WACUG members are eligible to attend. Besides the opportunity to talk with user group members from around the world, the conference also includes a variety of training and roundtable sessions on technology, computer security and user group operations. Representatives from companies such as Microsoft, Corel, Intel and Linspire will also be there, giving previews and demos of their latest products. Registration is $75 through October 17, $100 from October 18 through November 30, and $150 afterwards. Register online and get more information at http://www.apcug.net/.

APCUG negotiated rates for rooms at the Stardust end on December 2, and room availability will be limited due to the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES), January 5-8. The reservation code and reservation phone number are also on the APCUG conference web site.

Those interested in attending CES must register for that separately at http://www.cesweb.org/. CES is not open to the general public, but the CES Exhibits Plus Pass is free to those in the consumer electronics industry until December 30, and $100 afterwards. For what it's worth, I am able to attend registered as a WACUG Board member, so the entry qualifications are not terribly restrictive.

LinuxPrinting.org

Anyone looking to purchase a printer for use with GNU/Linux is well-advised to pay a visit to the Linux-Printing.org (http://linuxprinting.org/) web site first. This site features a searchable database of 1,813 printers and 250 drivers, and indicates how well the printer works with Linux print software. The site also has a list of recommended printers for various tasks, and plenty of useful information on configuring printers and printer software for the best results.

Linux CD of the Month

In addition to the CD-R discs described below, I can provide any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora Core, Mandrake, Debian, Knoppix) on CD-R. Note: download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support or printed documentation.

Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact me by phone (703-370-7649) or e-mail (ggoodrum@bigfoot.com) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information. Single discs cost $4 each; GNU/Linux distributions on two or three discs cost $6 per set. All executable programs are for Intel x86 compatible Linux distributions unless stated otherwise. Your requests and suggestions are always welcome!

August 2005

Album Cover Art Downloader - v1.6.0. Free GNU General Public License Python code with RPM and Debian packages by Sami Kyostila. Here's a program that will semi-automatically download album cover images for your music collection. All you have to do is point it at the root of your music directory and for each directory, the program will download a set of corresponding (well, best guess) album covers from the Internet, from which you can choose one that suits your fancy.

Darik's Boot and Nuke - v1.0.6. Free GNU General Public License boot floppy and CD images by Darik Horn. Darik's Boot and Nuke ("DBAN") is a self-contained boot floppy that securely wipes the hard disks of most computers. DBAN will automatically and completely delete the contents of any hard disk that it can detect, which makes it an appropriate utility for bulk or emergency data destruction.

FreeBASIC - v0.14 beta. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable by Andre Victor et al. FreeBASIC - as the name suggests - is a completely free, open-source, 32-bit BASIC compiler, with the syntax the most compatible possible with MS-QuickBASIC, that adds new features such as pointers, unsigned data types, inline-assembly and many others. Documentation and example programs are included.

PyTraffic - v2.5. Free GNU General Public License Python code and packages for Debian and Fedora Core 3/4 by Michel Van den Bergh. PyTraffic is a Python version of the board game Rush Hour created by Binary Arts Coporation. The goal is to remove the red car out of the grid through the slot on the right. To do this you have to slide the other cars out of the way. PyTraffic comes with about 19,000 puzzles ranging from intermediate to expert, and has an extremely smart hint facility which is able to find the best move in every position.

GNU/Linux Distibution Updates - Security and bug fix monthly updates for Fedora Core 4.

Kernel Source - kernel 2.4.31 with optional 2.4.32-pre3 patch and kernel 2.6.12 with optional 2.6.12.5 (stable) and 2.6.13-rc6 (testing) patches. Grsecurity 2.1.6 patches and administration utilities are included for the 2.4.31 kernel.

September 2005

Simon Tatham's Portable Puzzle Collection – v6229. Free MIT License source code by Simon Tatham. Portable Puzzle Collection is an assortment of single-player puzzle games (twenty-two at last count). It contains a reimplementation of Minesweeper where every puzzle is guaranteed to be solvable, a number of logic puzzles originally invented by Nikoli, an implementation of Sudoku, and an assortment of other familiar and not-so-familiar puzzle games perfect for energizing your brain during a coffee break.

POV-Ray – v3.6.1. Free POV-Ray License source code and executable by Persistence of Vision Raytracer Pty. Ltd. The Persistence of Vision Raytracer is a high-quality, totally free tool for creating stunning three-dimensional graphics. POV Ray for Linux is a command-line driven program that can render remarkable images from text scripts, but graphic interfaces are available for editing scripts and controlling the program (see Pyvon, below).

Pyvon – v1.3.2. Free GNU General Public License python code and RPM package by Fabien Henon. Pyvon is an editor for POV-RAY that works under Linux. It is written with Python and Tkinter (included in most Linux distributions). You need Python 2.2 or later for Pyvon to work properly. The editor also works with Windows and Mac but not the raytraces. It is mostly a GUI that enables to edit, debug, fire up POV scene raytraces straight from the interface.
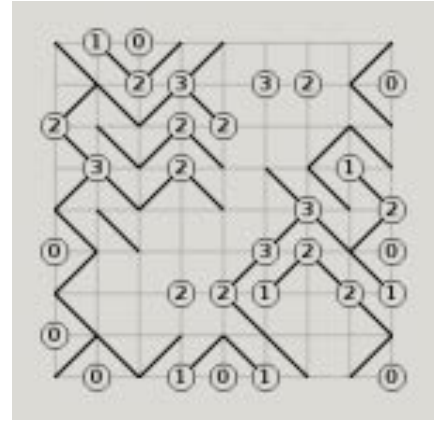
HPLIP – v0.9.4. Free GNU General Public License source code and Mandriva package by Hewlett Packard. This is the HP driver package to supply Linux support for most Hewlett-Packard Desk-Jet, LaserJet, PSC, OfficeJet, and PhotoSmart printers and all-in-one peripherals (also known as Multi-Function Peripherals or MFPs), which can print, scan, copy, fax, and access flash memory cards. It is work in progress, but printing, scanning, and memory card access are supported on most models, when either connected to the parallel port or USB on a Linux (Intel or Alpha) workstation. Access via LAN with selected HP JetDirect print servers is still not completely working, yet. In addition, there is the toolbox application with which several maintenance and status check tasks can be done. HPLIP requires the CUPS spooler and kernel 2.4.19 or later. Installation instructions are provided for most major GNU/Linux distributions.

HPIJS – v2.1.4. Free GNU General Public License source code by Hewlett Packard. HPIJS provide basic printing support for the largest number of HP printers (including several not supported by HPLIP). It can operate in any spooler environment (including no spooler).

GNU/Linux Distibution Updates - Security and bug fix monthly updates for Fedora Core 4.

Kernel Source - The latest versions of 2.4 and 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms.

☺

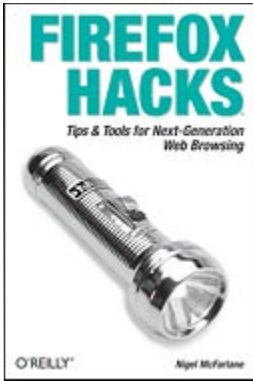Above; From *Simon Tatham's Portable Puzzle Collection*, – slant

Below: PyTraffic version of the board game *Rush Hour*.

to search your computer for "that file or information" you know you saved somewhere. FileLocator Pro does not consider any file too small or insignificant to examine. Major features

include: ZIP, RAR, CAB, PDF, Word Doc file searching; Active Scripting support for search customization; LAN/WAN network drives searching (UNC support); and the ability to export search results in Text, CSV, HTML, or XML format. http://mythicsoft.com/flpro/default.aspx

☺

Book Review

by Bill Bailes
Wacug Member

FIREFOX HACKS

By Nigel McFarlane
First Edition March 2005
ISBN: 0-596-00928-3
398 pages, $24.95 US

Firefox is a free open source web browser. Many have chosen it as an alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Firefox is a quick download, 4.7MB, from http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/ and a quick install. It works well with just the basic install, but there are many extra technical goodies. "Hacking Firefox to meet your needs is what this book is all about."(hacking is the author's term for modifying)

Reading through Firefox Hacks gives you an idea of just how powerful the program is, and how many different modifications that can be made to accommodate one's personal preferences.

Chapter One "Firefox Basics" gives you a very good introduction into Firefox and the first ten Hacks. Here you learn about Extensions. Extensions are small add-ons that add new functionality to Firefox. They can add anything from a toolbar button to a completely new feature. When downloaded from https://updates.mozilla.org/ the

extensions can be downloaded and installed. Other Chapters cover "Security," "Installation," "Web Surfing Enhancements," "Power Tools for Web Developers," "Power XML for Web Pages," "Hack the Chrome Ugly," "Hack the Chrome Cleanly," and "Work More Closely with Firefox."

In the nine chapters 100 Hacks are covered. You can pick and choose the ones that are of interest to you.

For six example hacks and the table of contents (listing all 100 hacks) and the index**,** go to http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/firefoxhks/index.html.

Many of the Hacks in this book tell how to change the source code/syntax. That was getting too far under the hood, so to speak, for me. I will save that for much later. Much of this book is aimed at the advanced user and serious Hackers. But the average user can learn a lot about the browser Firefox.

Remember, WAC members get a 30% discount off the list price of O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, PC Publishing, Pragmatic Bookshelf, SitePoint, and Syngress books. Just use code DSUG.

Want a book for Free?

1.Visit the O'Reilly website and find the book you want.

2. Send me the title and the ISBN number.

3. I'll send your request to the O'Reilly User Group coordinator and bring your book to the next meeting.

4. You simply complete a book review within the following month and you keep the book!

☺

Maintaining Your Downloads

By David Garcia, President, Little Blue PC Club, Northglenn, Colorado
petitbleu@comcast.net

Having trouble keeping track of your downloaded files? Here's a couple of easy procedures to help you maintain, identify, and document your downloads.

1. Create a "Downloads" Folder & Sub-folders

When downloading files, (for example, you buy some software online, and download it instead of having it mailed) it is a good idea to place all your downloads into a specific folder so that you can always find them when you need them. If you don't already have a folder called "Downloads," or "My Downloads," then you should create one on your hard drive (normally the "C:" drive).

To create a folder on the "C:" drive right-click the Start button on the desktop, then click "Explore" in the popup menu. This will open the Windows Explorer. Left-click the "Local Disk (C:)" icon to highlight it. Then click "File" on the Menu Bar and point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Folder." A "New Folder" is created on the C: drive. Rename it to "Downloads" or "My Downloads" as you prefer. To rename it just right-click it and select Rename from the popup menu.

Prior to downloading a given file it would also be good, for identification and documentation purposes, to create a sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder that identifies the origin of the download. Give the sub-folder a short name that identifies its origin. For example,

Chuck's Corner
A Euphoric Collection of Technical Tidbits and Other Interesting Facts

by Chuck Roberts,
WAC Member

From PC Magazine – Install applications on your USB flash drive.

Portable versions of Firefox, Thunderbird and Sunbird calendar may be downloaded, installed on and run from your flash drive. Developer John Haller made them portable. http://www.johnhaller.com/jh/mozilla.

John Haller also created a USB friendly version of the OpenOffice.org office suite. Both the 1.1.4 stable version and the 2.0 Alpha version are available. http://www.johnhaller.com/jh/useful_stuff/portable_openoffice.

An open-source password protection program is KeePass Password Safe. This program uses AES and TwoFish encryption so passwords won't be visible to keystroke loggers or other snooping software. http://keepass.sourceforge.net/

Genealogy Updates

MyFamily.com just released Family Tree Maker 2006 and is compatible with Ancestry.com. Various specials are being offered, some include training manuals and DVDs. Visit http://wwwfamilytreemaker.com/ for details.

Genealogy Today has launched Military Roots, http://www.militaryroots.com/ a free database of information transcribed from military rosters, muster rolls and troop histories. Information is added weekly so check back often if your ancestors served in the military.

Trafalgar Ancestors – The National Archives of Britain just posted a database of all who fought for His Majesty in the Battle of Trafalgar — the 1805 victory over France and Spain. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/. You can find non-Briton ancestors who fought in this battle. An advanced search with America as the birthplace produces a list of 361 Americans who served and fought in this battle. Check it out!

Two genealogy software companies have announced they'll introduce program updates next week. Millennia Software will unveil Legacy Family Tree 6 (http://www.legacyfamilytree.com) and RootsMagic will debut RootsMagic 3 (http://www.rootsmagic.com).

From SmartComputing Tips & Fun Facts

Reprinted with permission from Smart Computing. Visit http://www.smartcomputing.com/groups to learn what Smart Computing can do for you and your user group!

Web Security: Isolate Your Online Purchases — Whenever you enter information to register or purchase something at a Web site, the site often keeps quite a bit of that information on file, in case you return later. Sometimes you will have an option for the Web site to remember the credit card number. For security's sake, it's best to enter your credit card information each time. You've no doubt seen the news stories about the dozens of serious security breaches that have exposed thousands of credit cards for use by criminals. To create a "financial firewall" you may want to consider getting a credit card that you only use for online purchases.

Use Safe Mode To Remove Spyware — The most important point about spyware removal is to do it in Windows Safe Mode. This prevents almost all spyware from loading at startup and makes removal more reliable. First you'll need to connect to the Internet to install and update the definitions for the spy checkers. Then, at bootup, press F8 after the BIOS flash screen. Next choose the second option, "Safe Mode, with networking". Then finish checking for and removing any Spyware your tools find. Remember, it is acceptable to use multiple tools since each application has the ability to be fooled by Spyware.

Stay Up-To-Date On Microsoft Fixes — If you're also interested in knowing the latest updates to Microsoft's database, the http://www.kbalertz.com site can really help. This site will email you links to any updated pages in categories that you choose. You can also determine whether you want daily or weekly updates. It's an effortless way to keep yourself up-to-date on bugs and fixes

☺

if you download some anti-virus software from Symantec, you might name the sub-folder "Symantec." Then when you download the file place it into the Symantec sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder. Any subsequent downloads from Symantec should also be placed into this folder.

Creating the sub-folder is similar to creating the "Downloads" folder. To create the sub-folder you left-click the Downloads folder, click "File" on the Menu Bar, point to "New," click "Folder," and rename it. You

29 Useful Bookmarks

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET
www.tugnet.org

The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, that require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

1. Time Cave – http://www.timecave.com

2. Memo to Me – http://www.memotome.com

Using these two email reminder services you'll never forget another upcoming activity or event. Time Cave allows you to schedule incoming messages by interval (so many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years away) as well as by date and time. Memo to Me allows editing of content and date. With Time Cave you can choose your own subject line and send reminders to others, but Memo to Me will charge you for those features. On the other hand, Time Cave charges for the ability to repeat messages (monthly, weekly, etc.), standard with Memo to Me.

3. Way Back Machine – http://www.archive.org/web/web.php
Is a website you're seeking no longer around? If it was active as late as 1996, you'll probably find it easily in this huge archive.

4. Centerwatch Clinical Trials – http://www.centerwatch.com

Gives information on more than 41,000 active clinical trials in which you could participate. (Some compensate you handsomely for helping, along with free medical monitoring.) Includes a notification service, for trials in areas of your interest. Also describes the newest drug therapies.

5. Objectgraph Dictionary – http://www.objectgraph.com/dictionary

A combination standard dictionary, technical dictionary, and thesaurus. (There's also a dictionary of chemical elements, of rather limited interest). A unique feature is the site's ability to "read your mind" if you're not sure of the word you're thinking of – or its spelling – or if you just want to save typing.

6. Myway email – http://www.myway.com

An excellent Web-based email provider with an exceptionally clean interface (no banner ads or pop-ups). Unlike the case with competitors like Yahoo mail, Myway will respond to support inquiries. (It also has a terrific weather page – see link #7 following.) [If you prefer Gmail, equally clean-appearing, I can get you an invitation – see my article in the March Keywords.]

7. Myway weather – http://weather.myway.com

The best weather page on the Web. Even though its weather information is from weather.com, you'll see when you use it that the interface is much cleaner (and loading therefore faster) than if you were to bring up either weather.com or one of its competitors. You can personalize the weather according to your home town or zip code; the page you'll want to bookmark is that personalized page

8. Past Weather – http://www.weather.com/activities/other/other/weather/yesterday.html

Use this site to compare today's forecast with yesterday's weather. There's also interesting historical data and a graph showing the weather for the past seven days. The past weather information can easily be compared with the forecast from Myway weather (link #7), which derives its data from the same source.

9. Furl – http://www.furl.net

Bookmarking is useful, but what do you do when you find that a bookmarked page has disappeared (left the Web)? Or maybe it's still there, but – as with many newspaper sites – you can't read it without going to a paid archive. This won't be an issue if you've Furled the page. Furl allows you to create a set of special bookmarks that can be easily searched or browsed – or shared with others – but whose contents are permanently stored on your hard drive. (If you feel the need to save parts of a page, try Net Snippets Free at www.netsnippets.com/basic. This does require a download.)

10. Gold Star Events – http://snipurl.com/bl9o

Gold Star enables admissions to a large variety of live California productions at 50% off or better. After your (free) registration, you'll receive regular email notices of well-described shows in the zip code areas of your preference. There's a small per-ticket service fee, usually between $3 and $7.

11. Password Generator – http://mistupid.com/computers/passwordgen.htm

Random characters compose the safest passwords. This tool will create a password with random characters according to your specifications. On your instructions, will even avoid ambiguous characters [o

and 0, 1 and I].

12. Zap2it – http://www.zap2it.com

With Zap2it you can check out both TV and movie schedules. Various options let you permanently personalize each set of listings, to give you just the information you need, in the format you prefer.

13. Acronym Finder – http://www.acronymfinder.com

Don't be baffled by acronyms and abbreviations you encounter on the Web and elsewhere. This sit e offers definitions for over 398,000 such terms. Optional downloading of any of a number of search tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

14. Restaurant health ratings (LA County) – http://lapublichealth.org/rating

Avoid traveling to an appealing restaurant only to find that its health rating is below the level with which you're comfortable.

15. Translation Wizard – http://www.faganfinder.com/translate

The Translation Wizard uses other sites' services to ease the process of finding a translation – that otherwise might require visiting ten or more sites to find the language of interest! It also has a neat button to identify a mystery language.

16. Anybirthday – http://anybirthday.com

A fun site that can divulge your friend's birthday or even tell you where to mail the card.

17. TrackEngine – http://www.trackengine.com

Notifies you via email of changes in Web pages that you select. You can preview the changes or view the whole page via email, with changes highlighted. Choose the Web address of a neighborhood theater, to see what plays are coming up. Or see every new installment of a favorite newspaper column, without having to buy the paper.

18. GovBenefits.gov – http://govbenefits.gov

A source of information on over 400 government-funded programs that extend benefits for which you may qualify, including compensated volunteering. Features a confidential questionnaire designed to point you to the most likely matches.

19. AddALL – http://www.addall.com

Use this site to find the very best price for a book you want to buy. Unlike most other comparison sites, it figures in shipping costs for your location. Links will take you to pages for magazine subs, music CDs, and videos.

20. jux2 – http://www.jux2.com

Jux2 lets you receive and compare search results from two or three different search engines, or see what you're missing from your regular search results. (According to the site, competing search engines typically share fewer than 4 out their 10 top results.) Still in development, it's currently limited to Google, Yahoo, and Ask Jeeves.

21. Medem Medical Library – http://www.medem.com/medlb/medlib_entry.cfm

Searchable and browsable medical library, organizing contributions from 45 medical societies. Features a complexity indicator for each article, from "introductory" to "professional."

22. Metacritic – http://www.metacritic.com/film

23. Kids-in-mind – http://www.kids-in-mind.com Metacritic is an excellent source for movie critiques. For each film, it arranges its large variety of reviews from most to least favorable, and then tabulates the opinions, for an overall "metascore." (Additional Metacritic pages cover videos, music, and games.) For evaluating movies for children, or if you have a concern about violence, sex, or profanity, Kids-in-mind will rate and describe each film's content in those three areas.

24. CardRatings http://cardratings.com

This site maintains information on over 700 credit cards, and will suggest the best cards in a variety of categories –low or no credit, no annual fee, low interest, rewards/rebates, etc.

25. The California Patient's Guide – http://www.calpatientguide.org

A well-organized extensive guide to Californians" health care rights, and what you can do if they're compromised. Assembled by medical, legal, and consumer experts, and published by the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights.

26 CheckFree – www.checkfree.com

There are a host of good reasons for paying your bills online. It saves time, saves the cost of stamps, reduces the chance of late payment, extends the time in which you can use your money, cuts down clutter, eliminates the danger of checks lost in the mail, and facilitates tracking. With CheckFree you'll be able to pay many or most of your bills online, and the service is free to the

payers.

27. Bug Me Not – http://www.bugmenot.com

This site and the one following save you time and trouble while helping you cut down on spam. Bug Me Not keeps on hand log-in data (passwords with user names) for a huge number of sites that require registration. If you want access to such a site (like latimes.com), but don't want to bother registering, just visit the Bug Me Not site and log in easily.

28. Spam Bob – http://evil-wire.luvfeed.org/cache/1269

Spam Bob offers a choice of three email addresses that you create, to protect your privacy. Anything@spambob.org is a phantom address, messages to which disappear into the ether. Use anything@spambob.com if you'll want to check on a reply message. (This is handy for registrations that require confirmation.) And you may want to use anything@spambob.net for all your correspondents. Mail from each such "net" address can be forwarded to you, and if it starts generating spam, just cancel the forwarding order!

29. Google Maps – http://maps.google.com

Head and shoulders above the competition, these maps are much larger and far easier to configure. Zooming in and out is quick as a bunny, and re-centering is instantaneous. You can locate by category businesses in the map area, along with their phone numbers. Note that (at least as of this writing) these maps are not implemented in the regular Google search results, which will still point you only to Yahoo and MapQuest maps.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (http://theskillspool.org). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

☺

---

should now have a sub-folder within the Downloads folder. The hierarchy should look like this:

Local Disc (C:)
Downloads (or My Downloads)
      Sub-folder (you name it)

2. Documenting the Download

When a file is downloaded it usually has a cryptic name like "Abc4205.exe" To further document my downloads, I create a text file within the sub-folder that identifies the download. Within the text file I give a description of what the download is, when I downloaded it, and when I installed it. I give the text file the same name as the downloaded file except for the extension. For example, if I downloaded a file called "Abc4205.exe" from Symantec using the procedure #1 above, it would be in the "Downloads" folder in the "Symantec" sub-folder. I would then create a text file called "Abc4205.txt," and also place it in the "Symantec" sub-folder. In this example, I would have two files within my "Symantec" sub-folder: Abc4205.exe which is the downloaded file and Abc4205.txt which is my description of the downloaded

file.

To create the text file left-click the sub-folder name (e.g. "Symantec") once. Click "File" on the Menu Bar and then point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Text File." A "New Text Document.txt" file will be placed into the subfolder. Rename the file to the download file name (without the "exe" extension). Now double-click the renamed text file to open it with Notepad. Type in your description of the download and save it.

Using the above two procedures gives you an orderly method of maintaining, identifying, and documenting your downloads.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

☺

The WAC Board of Directors, SIG Leaders and other Volunteers

President:... Paul Howard, 703-860-9246, plhoward@verizon.net
Vice-President:.. Jim Brueggeman, 703-450-1384, bigjimo1@aol.com
Secretary:... Jorn Dakin, 703-534-8691, ldakin@alumni.uchicago.edu
Treasurer: .... Bob Rott, blbob1@erols.com
Internet Support: .... Lu Spriggs, 703-361-0014, spriggsl@erols.com
Vendor Contact: .... Chuck Roberts, 703-876-9787, chrobe@cox.net
PC SIG Leader/Disk Librarian:............. Bob Mason, 703-503-9324, Bob.Mason@remjem.com
Linux SIG Leader, Membership Chair: . Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649, ggoodrum@bigfoot.com
Meeting Setup/APCUG Liaison: .... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141,bill.walsh@cox.net
Web Site Team: .... Paul Howard and Chuck Roberts
Newsletter Editor:.................................. Chuck Roberts

Reprints/Article Submission

WAC encourages reprints of *Cursor* articles. Reprints must not be abridged or modified, and must identify the author, *The Cursor*, and the Washington Area Computer User Group. Please contact the WAC Secretary about downloadable articles and article submission procedures. Products or brand names mentioned may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

If Your Address Changes or is Incorrect:

Call Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649 evenings or mail change of address to:
WAC, 30 Fendall Ave, Alexandria, VA 22304-6300

2005 WAC Membership/Renewal Application

2005 Dues are for the Calendar Year and include Disk Library Discounts, and WAC's monthly newsletter, *The Cursor*, by 1st Class mail to your home.

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: $25.00/yr
($15 for the remainder of 2005)

Remit payment in person at the WAC Membership table on meeting day, or by mail to:
Washington Area Computer User Group
30 Fendall Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304-6300
Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send cash by mail. *Thank you for joining WAC!*
Complete if you name and address do not appear on the reverse side. Include E-mail Address
Name: _____
Street:_____
City: _____
State: _____   Zip:_____
Phone: (_____)_____–_____

E-mail: _____

Membership Survey: Help us to help you by completing this survey. List the computer systems you own / use (in order of preference)

_____

_____

Operating System(s): _____

Modem(s):_____

Printer(s): _____

Other Hardware: _____

Favorite Software: _____

Connection: (circle one)   Dial-up   or   Broadband

Circle Your Interests: Word Processing Databases Games
Photo Editing/Printing Internet Access   Education Music
Graphics/Animation   Genealogy   Video   Finance
Programming Language(s)_____
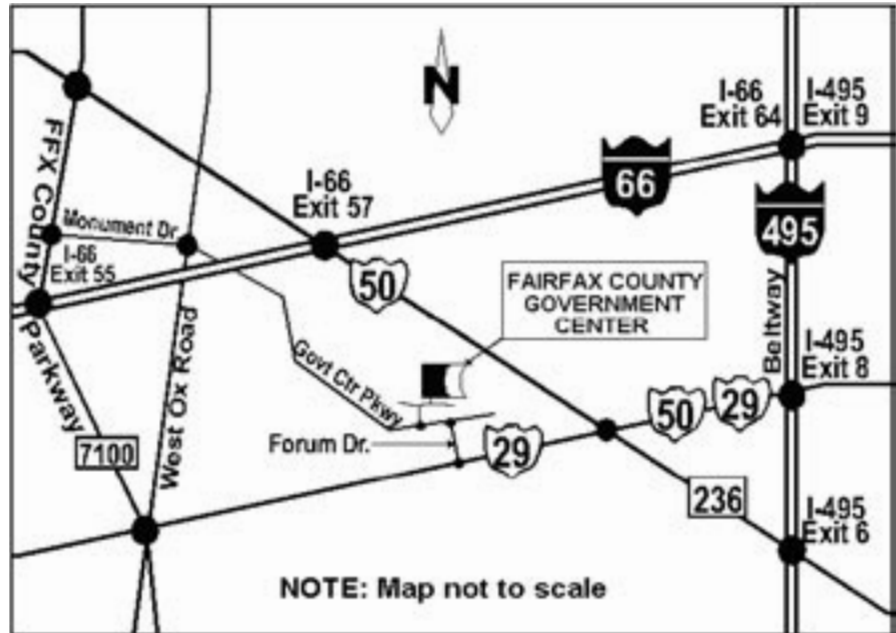Hardware Upgrades/Repair   List others below

Next WAC Meetings: • September 17   • October 15 • November 19   • December 10

**Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:
http://www.wacug.org**

Meetings are held at the
Fairfax County
Government Center

Through Front Entrance to
the Left Hallway, Past the
Elevators to:
Conference Room 2-3

Service Desks Open at
12:30 Meeting Starts at
1:00 PM
FREE ADMISSION
BRING A FRIEND!

Washington Area Computer Users Group
30 Fendall Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304-6300
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Stamp

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL
Please Deliver By
Friday, September 9

Label