Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.

THE PRINTER

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy Holidays Everyone!

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and Black Friday, and I hope everyone enjoys the upcoming holidays. We have some spectacular meetings coming up. I trust that you are able to attend. We are going to keep things festive this year. At our main meeting on December 13, we want to keep a party-like atmosphere.   I ask that everyone bring their favorite snack or beverage for others to share.

While indulging in the festivities, I 'll give a demonstration of the upcoming operating system from Microsoft, Vista! And possibly show Microsoft Office 2007, too. This won't be real heavy, trying to keep in the mood of the season, but I do want to give you an idea of some of the new features that you will see. Later in this issue you can see a list of some of the new features of Vista. **(see pages 6-7 & 9-10)**

DIY Computer

One aspect of Windows Vista is that the operating system requires more computing resources the many people have. As for an in place upgrade, it probably won't work very well. I recommend a fresh system. Within this issue I will discuss a plan to have a 2 day seminar at the CRSIG in Crownsville at which we will build a new system from the ground up.

This is a great way to learn how to build a system and load a new operating system. The PCs that will be built are not cutting edge systems with the absolute latest hardware. These will be more of

a 'bang for the buck' type of PC. But by no means will this be low-end either. See the article in this issue of The Printer.

TechNet Plus Direct

Microsoft offers a program mainly geared toward computer professionals, but you can take advantage of it, too. This program is called TechNet Plus Direct. As a member of this service you will receive access to basically all professional software for one year. This includes server and desktop operating systems, office suite software, databases, development languages, and many tools. Some of these things may seem a little over your head, but it's probably the lowest cost way to purchase the full version of Windows Vista and Office 2007. For more details and pricing, visit http:// technet.microsoft.com

Wireless Networking

Many members want to have a home, wireless network to share resources between their computers. If the weather cooperates, we will discuss Wireless networking and security at our January meeting. Setting up the network in relatively easy, having the devices work together and securely can be the challenging part. These are the issues that we will demonstrate and discuss.

Probably More Vista

With Vista expected to launch in January, we may have a visit from a Microsoft representative to

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - cont'd

demonstrate the operating system or Office 2007. If Microsoft does not attend the meeting, members of the users group may provide an updated view of the shipping operating system.

Winter Digital Photography

There are always many opportunities to take wintertime digital photographs. Processing the long shadows and high contrasts can be a challenge. Our March meeting is a good time to review processing the pictures that you took over the winter.

Combined Federal Campaign

The users group is an affiliate charity of the Combined Federal Campaign. For those of you who contribute to the CFC or know someone who contributes, please designate the Chesapeake PC Users group as one of your charities, we are number **3069**. With funding, we can really do a lot more with our meetings and organization.

See You At A Meeting!
Michael

News Briefs

The laptop battery recall saga continues with additional recalls from Lenova, Toshiba, and Gateway. Even Sony itself, is recalling 90,000 Vaio laptop batteries. The total is approaching 10 million units and the financial losses are staggering. According to Sony spokesman, Takashi Uehara, "..... the 51 billion yen ($443 mil US) figure doesn't include 'provisions for possible lawsuits' suggesting costs may actually grow."

If you have a laptop, the best approach would be to do a Google search for "*your laptop brand* & battery recall". This should get you started in determining if your laptop battery is involved in any of the current recalls..

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The Chesapeake PC Users Group

The Chesapeake PC Users Group (ChPCUG) is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization that has been active in Maryland since 1984.

PC Computer users are assisted through education classes, monthly user meetings, a newsletter, an on-line forum, and the opportunity to participate in Special Interest Groups. ChPCUG collaborates with all organizations and government agencies interested in advancing computer knowledge for members of the local community.

One of the most important functions of ChPCUG is Computer Refurbishing. It began in February 1999 with the purpose of refurbishing computers for those individuals, families, schools, and nonprofit organizations unable to afford a new computer. Grants allow provision of computers at no cost to those unable to make a donation. A modest donation is requested from those able to provide it. Volunteers perform all refurbishing activities.

The activities of the ChPCUG are to promote computer literacy, challenge the digital divide, and enable recipients to have access to the vast storehouse of information available on the Internet.

As of 1 October 2006, the Chesapeake PC Users Group has now provided over 1300 computers to those in need. Since 2004, over 350 computer systems have been provided to elementary school students at no cost.

Please direct your Combined Federal Campaign contributions to:

Code #3069

Project File: Build the Best Bang for the Buck Vista Ultimate Capable PC!

With the release of Windows Vista due to go on sale at the end of January, it's time to consider an upgrade. With this iteration of Windows, more attention should be paid to the amount of RAM and your video card. Recently there's been a lot of news about new hardware, and quite frankly, it can be confusing to get the most out of your dollar.

I am proposing, in the early spring (after Vista has been out for a little while), we take a weekend and build Vista capable PCs. I brought this up at the last meeting and there seemed to be a fair number of members interested in the project. Before you commit to participate in this project, I want to clarify some of the details.

First off, this is not a 'cheap' PC. For the hardware alone it will cost about $1500. The goal is to give you the most bang for the buck, but this is not a 'bleeding edge' system. The PC will have a solid operation and should last you for 3-4 years (with regular maintenance). Regular maintenance may mean adding some more RAM or upgrading the video card. So with all of that said, if you are still interested, let's jump into what you will get out of the project.

You will gain valuable experience and insight relevant to the assembly of a modern PC. This includes learning some of the latest PC technology and trends, when working with these systems. This experience will last you well into the future for your next system, or an additional PC you may want to build.

You will also gain the camaraderie of the other members who build a PC in the same workshop. If you have problems down the road, or would like to make modifications to your system, some of the other attendees can assist or may want to make similar modifications to their own PCs.

So what will $1500 buy you?

Below is a list of the hardware and some comments.

CPU: Intel E6600 @ 2.4 GHz $315
This CPU offers the most bang for the buck of the newer Intel processors, do the research online and you will see what I mean.

Motherboard: Undecided at this point $150
Since we won't be ordering parts for another few months, there are still some things shaking out on the motherboard front. I know the price will be about $150, but the specific board is in question.

Video card: BIOSTAR V7953GT52 GeForce 7950GT 512MB $260
I recently bought this video card and am very happy with the price/performance. The video card arena changes very quickly so on a couple of months my opinion may change (the GeFore 8800 series looks pretty sweet), but this is my choice for now.

RAM: 2 GB DDR2-800 $220
As with the motherboard, the exact memory will need to be decided upon when the time gets closer. Right now there are several decent 2 GB memory solutions. The current cost with shipping and before rebates is about $220. Hopefully this price will fall.

Hard drive(s): Seagate Barracuda 7200.10 ST3320620AS (320 GB) $95
The full name of this on NewEgg is: Seagate Barracuda 7200.10 ST3320620AS (Perpendicular Recording Technology) 320GB 7200 RPM 16MB Cache SATA 3.0Gb/s Hard Drive. This sums it up. I

from the Secretary's Desk
Minutes of CHPCUG Board meeting on October 18, 2006

Attendees: Mike Young, Mike Regimenti,
Fran Damratowski, Sam Shepherd, Craig Barlow, Henry Kipp (visitor) and Kris Johnson

OLD BUSINESS:
December Meeting: Vista (Early looks) presented by Mike Young and Holiday Party. Everyone is encouraged to being food to share with the group.
January Meeting: Wireless networking security by Mike Young &Yahoo Groups by Craig Barlow.
February Meeting: More Vista by Mike Young with possible input by Microsoft.
March Meeting: Digital Photography with Michael Alloy.
April Meeting: Possible presentation by Verizon and Fios.
May Meeting: Making Lightscribe CDs by Fran Damratowski.

SIGS:
Technology: Mike Regimenti's meeting on December 6th will look at Google Docs & Spreadsheets, Calendar & a quick look at the Photoshop's red eye tool.

CRSIG: Fran reported that for the year so far, her group has volunteered 2910 hours. The total computers donated stands at 1331. She is now accepting only computers that are 700 mHz and faster. Mike Young encouraged Fran and two others of her choice to attend the March 9th and 10th Computer Refurbisher Summit in Washington, D.C. The club will pay the cost for each person to attend.

Mid-Shore CUG: All is going well.

Treasurer's Report: Karl emailed his reports & the club is fiscally solvent.

NEW BUSINESS
Mike Young reported that in the Spring, he hopes to have a one day workshop, for the purpose of building a Vista ready computer. The cost will be approximately $1500 for parts. He recommended that all participants purchase from TechNet Direct the subscription for the software which will cost approximately $349.

Mike Young suggested that the club buy Creative Suites Premium 2.3 for the board.

Kris Johnson suggested that we change the method of running our 50/50 raffle by having two different color tickets, one to go into the 50/50 raffle bucket and one into the prize bucket. When members buy a 50/50 raffle ticket they would automatically get a second ticket for the prize bucket as a bonus. Drawings for club financed prizes would be taken from the prize bucket only. The board approved this and the cost of the extra tickets.

Fran brought up the question of just what benefits dues paying members receive from the club. If the club is to encourage new members, this is an area the Board should look into.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Kris Johnson
Secretary

Windows Vista - Performance

Sleep

Windows Vista introduces a new power state called *Sleep*. The new *Sleep* state in *Windows Vista* combines the speed of *Standby* with the data protection features and low power consumption of *Hibernate*. Resuming use when your PC is in the *Sleep* state takes just 2-3 seconds. You can shut down and restart your computer less often by using the new *Sleep* state, a simple one-click on and off experience which not only reduces power consumption, but also helps protect your data.

Sleep on desktop PCs

Sleep works in a different way on *Windows Vista*-based desktops than it does on *Windows Vista*-based laptops. When you turn off a *Windows Vista*-based desktop, all the documents, applications, and data that are currently in use are saved in two places. First, they are saved to the memory, or RAM, where they are quickly accessible (in *Windows XP* this was called *Standby*). Simultaneously, the information is saved to the computer's hard disk (in *Windows XP* this was called *Hibernate*). In *Sleep*, *Windows Vista* simultaneously saves the current user information to both memory and the hard disk.

In *Sleep*, *Windows Vista* uses the data saved to memory to help you restart faster after extended periods of non-use. Simply move the mouse or press any key on the keyboard and the computer starts up within seconds.

The *Sleep* state uses the data saved to your hard disk to protect it in case of power loss. When you resume the use of your desktop after a power failure, *Windows Vista* will quickly restart from Sleep using the data saved to disk, with all of your data and applications intact.

Sleep on laptop PCs

On laptop PCs, you can enter the *Sleep* state by pressing the **Power** button or closing the laptop lid. Your data is saved to memory, letting you restart faster. As battery power winds down, *Windows Vista* quickly transitions the data to disk to help keep the data safe. *Windows Vista* lets you resume use of your computer more quickly and reliably than previous versions of *Windows*.

Windows SuperFetch

Windows SuperFetch, a new technology in *Windows Vista*, allows applications and files to load much faster than on *Windows XP*-based computers. In previous versions of Windows, system responsiveness could be uneven. You may have experienced sluggish behavior after booting your machine, after performing a fast user switch, or even after lunch. Although too many carbohydrates might slow you down after lunch, your computer slows down for different reasons. When you're not actively using your computer, background tasks—including automatic backup and antivirus software scans—take this opportunity to run when they will least disturb you. These background tasks can take space in system memory that your applications were using. After you start to use your PC again, it can take some time to reload your data into memory, slowing down performance.

SuperFetch understands which applications you use most, and preloads these applications into memory, so your system is more responsive. *SuperFetch* uses an intelligent prioritization scheme that understands which applications you use most often, and can even differentiate which applications you are likely to use at different times (for example, on the weekend versus during the

Windows Vista - Performance - cont'd

week), so that your computer is ready to do what you want it to do. ***Windows Vista*** can also prioritize your applications over background tasks, so that when you return to your machine after leaving it idle, it's still responsive.

Windows ReadyBoost

Adding system memory (RAM) is often the best way to improve your PC's performance. More memory means applications can run without needing to access the hard drive. However, upgrading memory is not always easy. You need to know what type of memory you need, purchase the memory, and open your computer to install the memory—which sometimes can invalidate your support agreement. Also, some machines have limited memory expansion capabilities, preventing you from adding RAM even if you are willing to do so. ***Windows Vista*** introduces a new concept in adding memory to a system. ***Windows ReadyBoost*** lets users use a removable flash memory device, such as a USB thumb drive, to improve system performance without opening the box. ***Windows ReadyBoost*** can improve system performance because it can retrieve data kept on the flash memory more quickly than it can retrieve data kept on the hard disk, decreasing the time you need to wait for your PC to respond. Combined with ***SuperFetch*** technology, this can help drive impressive improvements in system responsiveness.

Windows ReadyBoost technology is reliable and provides protection of the data stored on your device. You can remove the memory device at any time without any loss of data or negative impact to the system; however, if you remove the device, your performance returns to the level you experienced without the device. Additionally, data on the removable memory device is encrypted to help prevent inappropriate access to data when the device is removed.

Windows ReadyDrive

Windows ReadyDrive enables ***Windows Vista*** PCs equipped with a hybrid hard disk to boot up faster, resume from hibernate in less time, preserve battery power, and improve hard disk reliability. Hybrid hard disks are a new type of hard disk, with integrated nonvolatile flash memory.

The hybrid disk is intended for mobile PCs running ***Windows Vista***. Your data is written to the flash memory, which saves work for the mechanical hard disk—saving the battery power. The hybrid disk helps ***Windows Vista*** resume faster from Sleep because data can be restored from flash memory faster than from the mechanical hard disk. And since more data is written to the integrated flash memory than to the traditional hard disk, you have less risk of hardware problems with the hard disk when you're on the move. ***Windows Vista*** takes advantage of hybrid hard disk to save battery life, resume use faster from hibernation, and improve reliability.

Chesapeake PC Users Group

November 9, 2006
Scammers Hooking Bigger Phish

Business is Good for Phishers

The size of their average catch increased almost five-fold, from $257 per victim last year to $1,244 in 2006.

According to Gartner analyst Avivah Litan, this is happening because scammers are identifying higher-income targets, moving their phishing sites more frequently and switching up the types of business they try to impersonate.

Victims click on links they receive in the body of e-mails — and, increasingly, in instant messages — from sites purporting to be legitimate businesses like financial institutions, e-commerce and auction sites.

Approximately 109 million U.S. adults have received phishing e-mail attacks, up from 57 million in 2004, according to Gartner.

Total losses from phishing attacks rose to $2.8 billion in 2006, twice the amount lost in 2004.

According to the survey, conducted by Gartner analysts in August of this year, adults earning more than $100,000 per year are attacked more often than those making less.

This group reported receiving an average of 112 phishing e-mails in 2006, versus 74 e-mails per consumers across all income brackets.

On average, the high-income adults lost $4,362, almost four times as much as other victims.

According to Litan, cyber criminals have done a better job of identifying high-income individuals.

They sell each other credit card numbers in online chat rooms, and can identify credit cards with higher spending limits by the first six digits on the card.

They also get their hands on more promising lists, such as brokerage customers, figuring that those people are likely to have a high net worth.

Attackers also intercept the names of consumers participating in auctions for high-ticket items, such as cars.

Typically, the phishers wait until the end of an auction and then inform all the losers that they in fact won, getting them to send money for something they'll never get.

Banks and credit card companies tend to have liberal refund policies in order to maintain consumer confidence, Litan noted.

Nevertheless, the average amount of money consumers recovered after being victimized dropped from 80 percent in 2005 to just 54 percent in 2006. Phishers are also moving from site to site more frequently, which means they can't be shut down as easily.

"The average life of phishing sites has gone from one week a couple of years ago to about one hour in 2006," said Litan.

"Within a year or so, phishing sites may be user-specific — a single site will be set up to launch a phishing attack against a single user," she predicted.

"It's no wonder the detection services can't keep up with these rapid criminal movements." Indeed, Litan told *internetnews.com* that consumer sites like eBay (Quote) and PayPal, which are increasingly the foils for phishing scams, haven't been able to keep up with the crooks despite their best efforts.

"Nothing is working for them."

Litan said the solution is to improve security within the browser combined with the use of whitelists and other secure certificates on the server side, such as PKI (define).

Vendor groups such as the CA/Browser Forum have begun developing higher-level secure certificates to offer legitimate businesses.

The certificates work in conjunction with

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Windows Vista Preview

Ease of use

When you start using Windows Vista, you will recognize familiar elements such as the Start menu, which is now faster, more streamlined, and more helpful than in previous versions of Windows. The Start menu features integrated desktop search through a new feature called Instant Search which can help you find and launch almost anything on your PC. Just type in a word, a name, or a phrase, and Instant Search can find the right file for you. But more than that, the new start menu makes it very easy for you to navigate across all of the installed applications on your PC. Eliminating the slow performing, cascading "All Programs" view, the new start menu can help you get something started more quickly than ever.
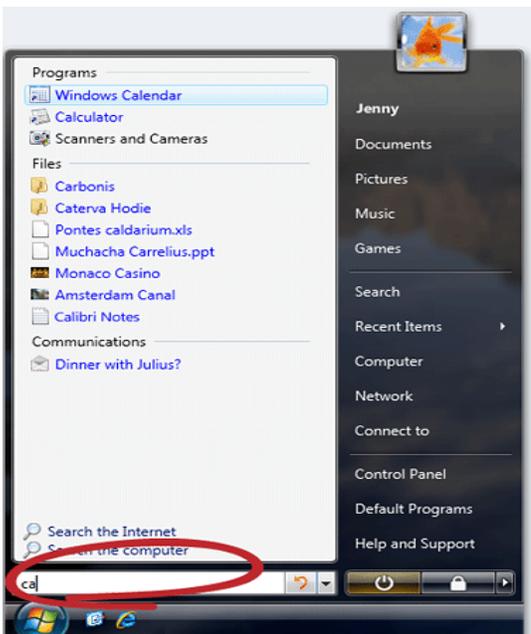
Use Instant Search to quickly find the information you need.

Explorers

The new Explorers are powerful yet easy-to-use tools for working with files consistently across Windows Vista. Explorers give you more information and control while simplifying how you work with your files. The experience is easy and consistent, whether you're browsing photos or documents or even using the new Control Panel.

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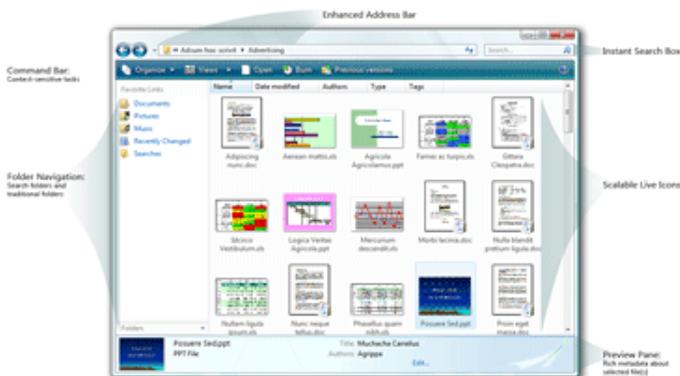
Windows Vista Preview - cont'd

The new Document Explorer makes working with your files a snap. Find your files more quickly with the new Live Icon feature, and see what they contain, without having to open them.

Key elements of the Explorers in Windows Vista are designed to help you get to the information you need, when you need it. Instant Search is always available to help you find files instantly. The navigation pane contains the new Search Folders found in Windows Vista, as well as traditional folders that you have created on your computer. Command Bars display only the tasks that are most appropriate for the files being displayed. With new Live Icons (scalable thumbnails) used throughout Windows Vista, you can see the first page of documents, the actual image of a photo, or the album art for individual songs in your music collection, making it easier to find exactly what you are looking for.
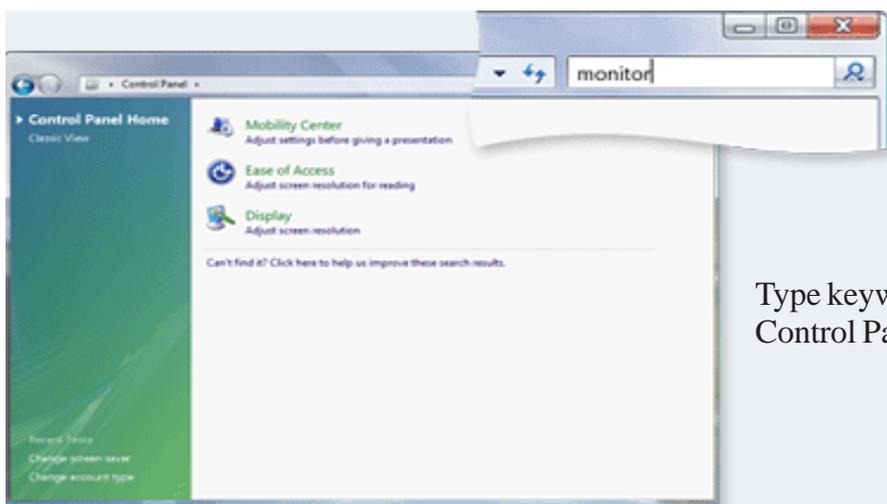
Type keywords into the Instant Search box in the new Control Panel to find the right system setting quickly.

Windows Aero

Windows Vista is the first Windows operating system that has a user experience that can gracefully scale to the hardware capabilities of the computer it is installed on. All computers that meet minimal hardware requirements will see the Windows Vista Basic user experience, which provides the benefits of the refined interface features already mentioned.

Windows Vista Aero provides spectacular visual effects such as glass-like interface elements that you can see through.

Windows Aero is an environment with an additional level of visual sophistication, one that is even more responsive and manageable, providing a further level of clarity and confidence to Windows users.

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Vista Computer Project - cont'd

will recommend the at least two of the drives be purchased for building your RAID array.

Case: Rosewill R6AU6-BK ATX Mid Tower Computer Case
$50
This seemed to have a lot of nice features and should last you a while. A case is a personal choice, but I didn't see any issues with this one.

Power Supply: ePOWER ZU-550W ATX12V Version 2.0 550W   **$55**
This seemed like a nice middle of the road power supply. The important thing is the current available on the 12V supply line (rails). This power supply has 18A and 16A on two separate rails. This is a great way to distribute the power to your components.

CPU Cooler: Tuniq Tower 120   **$65**
I am currently using this CPU cooler and can recommend it. It's quiet and really helps to keep the CPU cool. The one issue to keep in mind with this cooler, it's HUGE! It stands about 8 inches high and just clears the case that I am using. But once it's in your system, you probably won't overheat the CPU any time soon.

DVD Drive: LITE-ON 18X DVD±R Burner $30
I have seen many reviews for DVD writers and Lite-On seem to make the best.

Miscellaneous: Add about   **$100**
With any project, there are always overages.

At this point the total is **$1435**. Some things may be able to be reduced here or there, but this is a firm number. I will revise this list as the time gets closer.

Michael

Business is Good for Phishers - cont'd

modern browsers to alert users when a site is a suspected fraud.

For an example of how this would work, security software vendor Verisign (Quote) shows a screen shot of an address bar on a background that is green because the user has gone to a verified site.
McAfee rolled out an application earlier this week alerting users if they are about to visit an untrustworthy site.

Litan said vendors should take advantage of the fact that the infrastructure already exists to improve security on the Internet.

"The designers of the Internet did a great job. The hooks are all there, they just need to be utilized."

Ed: Article courtesy of - http://www.internetnews.com/

**The Next Regular Meeting will be at
The Severn River Middle School**

**Wednesday,
December 13th, 2006
Meeting will be held in the large meeting room.
It starts at 7:00 PM with club business and a short discussion period.**

There will be a Presentation on

Microsoft Vista

by

Mike Young

&

Holiday Party!!

Members and their friends are welcome to come, ask questions and become enlightened.

How to Find: Severn River Middle School

SRMS is close to the Arnold, MD campus of the Anne Arundel Community College. From Annapolis and parts south, take Rte 2 (Ritchie Highway) north about 3 miles from the intersection of Rt. 50, **turn right on College Parkway**. At the first light, turn left on Peninsula Farm Road. (Of course, if you are coming from points North, you would turn left on to College Parkway) about a half-mile down the road the large SRMS school building, set back off a large two level parking lot, will be visible on your right. Park here and go to the main entrance. Signs will be posted to direct you to the **Large Group Room** where we will be meeting.

How to find: The Technology SIG, A ChPCUG Special Interest Group**
Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.

Chesapeake PC Users Group

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FIRST CLASS

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... and a little more!**

Note: *The date above your name on the mailing label is the expiration date of your membership. Contact the Membership Chairman (page 2, column 2) to update.*

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