THE PRINTER

Chesapeake PC Users Group

Celebrating 25 Years of Users Helping Users

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope everyone enjoyed the December meeting. I was shocked to learn that I am the longest serving President, by a huge margin! I do plan to run for the office again in February, but as with all offices, it's up for vote.

I would encourage anyone who has an interest in helping to guide the Users Group, run for office. New blood is always welcome, and needed, on the Board of Directors.

State of the Users Group

The December meeting was a nice look back, but now it's time to look forward. The topics for the meetings tend to be discussions of new or upcoming products. I hope this is the format you like. If not, let me know. We do have the Q&A period of the meetings to discuss trouble-shooting, and technology tips in addition to Yahoo egroup for more immediate response between the meetings.

Speaking of the meeting topics, you may have noticed that we have more frequent and more valuable door prizes. The reason for this is that basically our non-profit organization is doing well financially and we are able to offer more to our members. I try to recommend purchases of capital equipment to help improve the meetings and the overall effectiveness of the group operations.

Recently several new laptop computers were purchased for the betterment of the club.

These will generally be used for meeting demonstrations, but are earmarked for more specific tasks as well. Our Webmeister, Mike 'Tony' Delucia will use his for updating the club's website and high-end photo editing. Fran Damratowski (our Mistress of Refurbishing) will use her system for managing the CRSIG operations and demonstrations at area Senior Centers. Professor Sam Shepherd will be presenting a Windows 7 course this Spring.

At an upcoming meeting (and in a newsletter article), we'll have in depth discussions with Tony, Fran, and Sam as to their thoughts and buying advice.

If you would like to be a presenter at an upcoming meeting, but don't own a Windows 7 laptop, we can make arrangements for you to borrow one.

January 13th Meeting – Office 2010 (beta)

Microsoft has a new version of their Office productivity suite on the way. At the meeting in January, we will show the beta release of this suite. I am using Word 2010 to write this article. I will give a high-level view of this suite with some of the more interesting features. If you would like to look at many features in depth, here is a FREE e-book on Office 2010 (http://cid-d7229b252a0ad6f2.skydrive.live.com/self.aspx/Public/693876ebook.pdf)

In addition, Tony Delucia will give a short demonstration of a program that he has been using recently called, LockNote. This is a very useful utility to track notes and documents. Hide your

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Cont'd

everyday notes in a safe place. Application and document in one: the mechanism to encrypt and decrypt a note is part of it. Secure, simple, independent. No installation required.

February 10th Meeting – Windows 7 Tips and Tricks

Folks will start to have new computers with the Windows 7 operating system. This will be a kick off for the upcoming Windows 7 course that we hope to offer in the spring.

......and the Hard Drive goes to

At the December meeting, several members won hard drives:

Craig Barlow - longest dues paying member
Sam Shepherd - oldest newsletter (June 1986)
Leo Kotschenreuther - oldest software

I hope to see you at the upcoming meetings!

Michael

2009 Come and Gone - cont'd

greed. Do you remember the world before the internet? What you may not remember, or possibly don't know about, was the existence of computers connected via phone lines and other cabling systems which were military and scientific in nature. Then the rest of us got into the act.

Outlook for 2010: For computer users who want something more than email and surfing, there continue to be ways to improve skills. And many of those choices are still available free on the internet. Check out your favorite program to see what and where you can find training programs, then DO IT!! Make the effort to at least make Microsoft, Apple and all others work for you instead of the other way around.

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What You Need for that New Christmas Computer

by
Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials
FREE Security software
http://www.cloudantivirus.com   Panda Cloud
Antivirus
http://free.avg.com   Free AVG
http://www.avast.com Free Avast!
http://download.cnet.com/ZoneAlarm/3000-
10435_4-10039884.html

Now that Christmas and Hanukkah are past, many of you have opened that new computer and delved deep into its features. Preliminary estimates are that a huge number of new computers were purchased this holiday season, and a refresher is in order such that you have some idea of what you may need with that new computer in order to maximize your computing security and safety.

Most new computers came with some edition of Windows 7 installed, which appears to be a vast improvement over the Vista which was installed on last year's holiday computers. Despite its improvements, Windows 7 still has vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. Contrary to some allegations floating in cyberspace, I am utterly convinced that some comprehensive security software is an absolute necessity. Almost all new computers come with a limited trial version of security software, such as Symantec's Norton, or a McAfee security product. While these trial versions are functional for their short life expectancies, the clear intent is to sell you a paid subscription, often at an un-discounted full retail price, once the limited version expires. Be aware that it is not the unbiased recommendation of your computer manufacturer that you purchase that particular software, but a crass commercial activity, whereby the computer maker may have been paid to put that trial version on the computer, and may receive a hefty commission in the event that

you pay for a subscription. One major computer maker even offers not to install this commission bearing software on new computers for a $50 fee! That should be an indication of its value to the computer maker.

You need decent protective software, consisting, at a minimum, of antivirus, anti-spyware, and a firewall. While you may be protected for a short time by the trial versions of the security software factory installed on your computer, you have time to shop around for deals on security software, or to try some of the free titles that are available. Watch the Sunday sale books for the big box electronics stores and office supply companies, as many are offering deals, including high value rebates on major security titles. As I type this, one big box store in particular has three major comprehensive security suites advertised for between free and $10 after rebates; each package is good for up to three licenses, meaning that you can legally install it on up to three computers. Two of those three titles are the exact same products that are commonly installed as trial versions on new computers that offer an annual subscription for $40 to $70, but are available almost for free (after rebates) from the big box store.

Maybe holiday bills are coming due, and you would like to save some money by using some of the free security software that is available. There are some excellent freeware products available that will do as good a job protecting your new computer from cyber threats such as viruses, spyware, and malware as the expensive commercial software, and sometimes even better! One such free product is Microsoft's new "Security Essentials" which is a no frills but competent security product that can protect that new computer from viruses, worms, Trojans, and most other

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malware attacks. Fully compatible with Windows 7 (and Vista), this product can be downloaded for free directly from Microsoft at www.microsoft.com/security_essentials. Another excellent free product that can protect your new computer from malware threats is Panda's new Cloud Antivirus, available at www.cloudantivirus.com. Other very reputable free products are AVG's AntiVirus Free Edition (free.avg.com) and Avast's Free Home Edition (www.avast.com).

You need to have a firewall to protect your computer from intrusions by outsiders, such as hackers and crackers. Users are often blissfully unaware that while online, inadequately protected computers are very commonly probed or attacked by miscreants looking for weak spots. A good firewall makes this more difficult as it acts like a guarded and locked gate that greatly restricts unauthorized access from others in cyberspace. The firewall built into Windows 7 is minimally adequate, and should be turned on unless supplanted by a third party firewall. Many of the comprehensive security suites include a firewall, and there are several free firewalls available. The most popular free firewall is ZoneAlarm Free Firewall, available for free download from CNet's Download.com download.cnet.com/ZoneAlarm/3000-10435_4-10039884.html. With almost 50 million downloads from CNet alone, the ZoneAlarm Free Firewall is probably the world's most widely used free firewall, and it has well earned that distinction.

One very strong warning is appropriate here; do not, under any circumstances, purchase security software that first appears as a popup window on your new computer and informs you that you are infected with a raft of viruses and Trojans, and that for a fee, you can download its product and forever rid yourself of the threats. This is a scam known in the trade as "scareware" or "scumware" and is often worse than useless, as it often installs even more malware on your com-

puter and protects you from nothing, and possibly even opens up your computer to a wider attack by key loggers, password stealing Trojans, and other terrible threats.

Something that is often overlooked that is a threat to computers is the electricity that is essential to operate them. In reality, we do not always receive "clean" electricity, but instead receive power that varies and has surges, spikes, and other forms of electrical noise. Bad electricity, mostly in the form of power surges can kill a computer quicker than a bullet can. Another imperative is a good quality surge suppressor which should infallibly be used between the computer's power plug and the wall socket. A surge suppressor may look somewhat like a common power strip, but its internal electronics are dramatically different. Look for a "UL 1449" label indicating that the suppressor meets UL standards, and the higher the "joule" rating and faster the response time, the better. I carry a small surge suppressor in my laptop case, and have a larger one (actually a "UPS" or Uninterruptible Power Supply) attached to my desktop computer. Many surge suppressors also come with connections to protect phone (and fax) lines, network cables, and TV cables, all of which can carry electrical noise and power spikes to the equipment. Bad electricity can instantly fry sensitive computer components, and a good suppressor offers some valuable protection. Most of the time the user will never know that a suppressor just saved their precious electronic equipment from certain destruction, as it typically performs its tasks silently. Suppressors do wear out and need to be replaced periodically, with failure often indicated by an LED showing that the suppressor is no longer protecting the equipment.

There are other useful items for that new computer that will increase its functionality and longevity. More memory will improve performance up to certain limits; 32 bit Windows 7 can use up to 4 gigs of memory, and the 64 bit Win-

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Working With Office Professional 2010 Beta

by

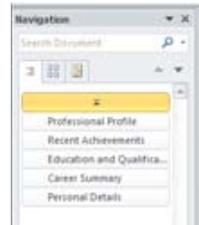*jasonslater on December 23, 2009*

What better to do just before Christmas than to give Microsoft Office 2010 Beta a first look. The Office Professional 2010 beta, a 617 MB download, contains the applications Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Access, and Publisher.

One of the key features, and messages, of Office 2010 is the ability to "*create, edit and share documents from virtually anywhere*", something that is sorely lacking in the current crop of office suite applications available, even Google Apps prefers an online connection so it will be interesting to see how Office 2010 holds up.

Once installed, you will be given the opportunity to continue the process online, in order to store and share documents online, by setting up Office Web Apps – the online companions to the key applications of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Various introductions and tutorials are also available by going online at this stage. The computer is also likely to need a reboot.
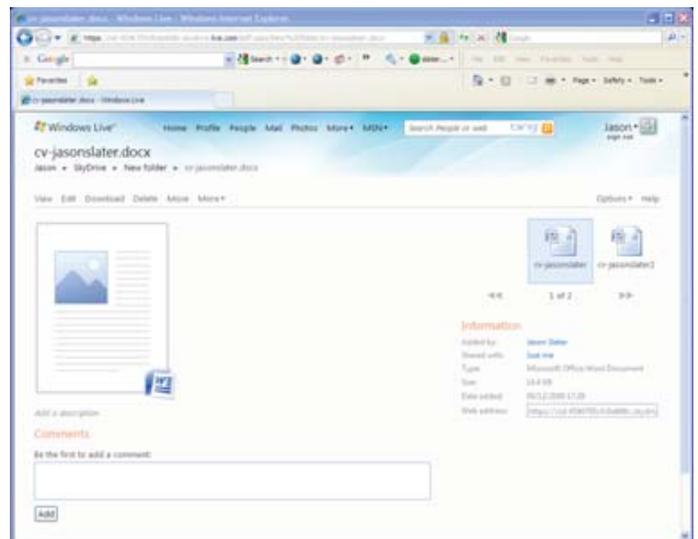
First impressions, after firing up Word, is that the toolbar looks a lot cleaner with a white and grey feel to it. Accessing the File menu immediately brings up a list of recent documents (although it doesn't check if the files have been moved since they were last edited). Though loading and seeing the documents felt a lot quicker than using Word 2007. Here, the flat colour scheme really helps you focus on your document which is a plus point.

There is also a navigation panel on the left hand side which lists the key Headings for fast navigation around the document, this also looks like it will help in structuring the document too and it's great to see it available by default. Other options in the Navigation panel are thumbnail page view, and search view.

Once a document is opened, clicking on the File Menu option brings up important information about your document, these were previously available in various option settings but are now presented with a thumbnail view, a conversion option for compatibility, permissions, sharing, and version history.
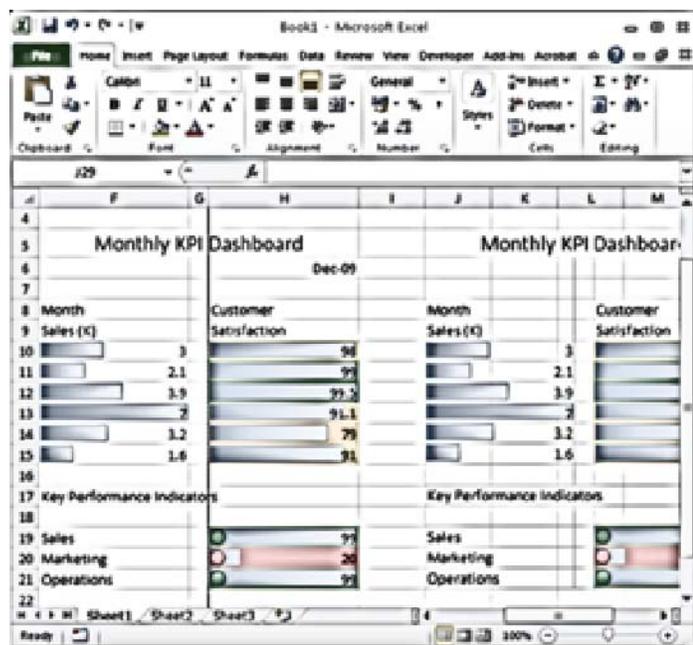
To enable a document for sharing online was a matter of clicking the File menu, selecting Share, then Save to SkyDrive. The first time I tried this it said it couldn't connect but logging into SkyDrive fixed this and it was fine from then onwards. Once the file was on SkyDrive it could be edited although the options says it is not currently available, however viewing worked fine.

One of the useful features in PowerPoint is Insert Screenshot which, when selected, shows a thumbnail list of all the current windows and brings an instant screen shot over when a thumbnail is clicked. Portions of the screen can be

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Office Professional 2010 Beta - cont'd

selected using the Clipping option, simply draw a box around the area of screen you want to capture. A number of artistic filters can be applied to images too which offers more creative options.

In Excel, the Conditional Formatting has been expanded to add data bars, colour scales, and icons to provide better visualisation of information. Using dashboards for clear and concise visual representation of information is becoming increasingly popular and, until now, has often relied on expensive Dashboard software – it is good to see Excel taking advantage of its own platform

The beta test features, Send-a-Smile, and Send-a-Frown, are fun and useful ways for Microsoft to get feedback about the products. Both options, for sending good and negative feedback respectively, add a screen shot and can also include contact information with your submitted comments.

You can download Office 2010 at: http://www.microsoft.com/office/2010/en/download-office-professional-plus/default.aspx

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2009 Come and Gone - cont'd

gitimate learning and business is losing the battle. Even the so-called online universities are often nothing but sham corporations. They tie people up with debt as soon as they enroll, knowing full well that many of their "students" will never finish even the first course, much less graduate. And what are those degrees worth? I guess I can expect

a lot of dissent on that subject, but first hand experience with relatives has shown me that my theory is on target.

But of course, the upside is that the internet system will probably implode in perhaps the not-too-distant future. Either governments will hijack it or it will just crumble from its own weight and

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by
Ira Wilsker

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About a year ago, I wrote about some of the excellent resources available that provide a wide selection of full-length books as free downloads. Since writing that column I have become aware of some other websites that also offer a wide selection of free and inexpensive e-books. For those who may not be aware, e-books are books of all genres that are available for download. A large assortment of titles, are available for a fee that can be downloaded to Amazon's proprietary Kindle; Amazon claims that over 360,000 titles, including many current best sellers, are available for download. Barnes and Noble recently announced its own proprietary e-book reader, the Nook, which will be released in early 2010. Barnes and Noble has stated that it will have over a million titles available for download to the Nook. While many new releases and best-sellers will be priced at about $10 at both Amazon and Barnes and Noble, there is also a massive library of titles that can be downloaded for free from a variety of sources. The Kindle and Nook are relatively expensive, retailing for $259 each. For those not willing to spend that amount, there are thousands of titles that can be freely downloaded and displayed on computer in the universal PDF format.

In the minutes before typing this column, I downloaded a few titles from two sources that I have not used in the past. Both required free registration, and both offer a selection of both free and paid content. The paid content is usually reasonable in price, with one website offering unlimited downloads of paid content for about $5 per month (free-ebooks.net, discounts available), and another offering unlimited downloads for $9 per year (worldlibrary.net). The first "new" website for me was downloadfreepdf.com, where I found a book for one of my daughters who recently had her first child. I downloaded for free "Baby's First Year - What Every New Parent Needs to Know!" as a PDF file for my daughter. I also found and downloaded two free e-books for my wife, "10 Strategies to Improve Your Nursing Care", and "Student Nurse's Bible". Even though they were all free, I had to go through a checkout process as if I was paying for them, being sure to check the button that indicated that they were free. As soon as I completed the checkout process, the books were instantly available for download as PDF files. The default is to display the files in a browser window; in order to save the e-books on the computer, be sure to click on the "save" icon in the browser window (often a floppy-disk icon), and not the File-Save command on the browser toolbar.

The website ebooknetworking.com has an impressive menu of topics, but many of the topics only offer a small selection of e-books. I like interesting cookbooks, and this website has four titles available as free downloads, "300 Chicken Recipes", "Delicious Diabetic Recipes," "Great Sandwiches", and the "Big Book of Cookies".

The website free-ebooks.net offers a limited number of free e-books for download in PDF format (5 per month free), or unlimited downloads for $5 per month or $20 per year. There is no limit on the number of titles that can be viewed for free online in HTML (webpage) format. The first category I looked at was "Business" which contained 166 titles available in PDF format, or viewable online in HTML format, which can be viewed in any browser. Free-ebooks.net also makes most of its titles available in the Mobipocket format

E-Books for Free - cont'd

which may be downloaded and read on Amazon's Kindle, mobile phones, Blackberry, Palm, and several other reader formats. Another interesting category was the "Food and Recipes" section, which offered 66 cookbooks. One that attracted my attention was "Cajun Clark's Cookbook", which contains a free selection of about 80 Cajun recipes, and a link to purchase the entire cookbook of over 1000 recipes. In the Humor category was a very cute (and clean) "Knock Knock... Who's Joking?" a collection of hundreds of short jokes and one-liners. Being a history buff, I found a very interesting e-book in the History category on a subject that I had not seen before, "The Big Guns of the Boer War", by W. J. Havenga. Considering that thousands of people are paying $259 for a Kindle or a Nook, a $20 annual subscription to free-ebooks.net, which provides unlimited downloads, is a relative bargain. For computer users, finding just one good title a year justifies the expense.

Another interesting website is e-booksdirectory.com, which lists 2807 free e-books in 399 categories. The actual e-books are hosted on a variety of websites, including Project Gutenberg, and available in a variety of formats, including PDF, plain text, and a variety of formats compatible with the various e-book readers. I found the listings comprehensive, and downloaded (for free)

several titles on military history, religion, health, law, hunting & fishing, science, and travel. I found especially interesting "Mom's Home Cooking" volumes one and two, which had about 250 recipes each. There is something here for everyone at a price that can not be beat.

For those looking for free e-books that are generally highly technical, ebooksdownloadfree.com has a wide assortment available. The major categories of books at ebooksdownloadfree.com include medical, computer, sciences, history, and management. These books are mostly recent publications and require a few mouse clicks to reach the download page, but the results are well worth it. I downloaded several of the books and while the files were large, often over 10mb, they were the complete books in PDF format, including all of the pictures. Some of the downloads were in the RAR compression format, but there are several freeware utilities available that can uncompress the RAR format. Some of the downloads had an attached password text file which included a key to uncompress the files. A few of the download links opened up popup ads, which I quickly closed. This site, ebooksdownloadfree.com had some of the best current titles available.

I like to read and have reference books available. Free or inexpensive e-books may be the way to go.

What You Need - cont'd

use up to 4 gigs of memory, and the 64 bit Windows 7 can utilize much more than that. Memory is readily available and can often be installed by the user, but may not be cheap. I recently spent about $50 (after rebate; $75 before rebate) for 4 gigs of additional memory for my 64 bit Windows 7 machine, and there was an increase in performance.

That new laptop really needs a good case to protect it from bumps and physical shocks. Laptop and notebook computers are often fragile creatures, and need substantial protection from physical harm. Get a good carrying case for your

size laptop, and be sure that it has a lot of padding on all 6 sides and gives the computer adequate protection from all directions. You may never know when that case protected you from a cracked screen or worse, which would have either been a very large repair bill, or an otherwise useless computer. Play it safe, and get and use a good case for your laptop.

My late grandmother Dora had an old-world expression that she said anytime anyone in my family made a major purchase or received a major gift, and I am wishing the same for you and your new computer, "Use it in good health!"

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2009 Come and Gone

by
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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Yes, another year is coming to a close. And what do we have to show for it? Another Microsoft OS for those who are not already confused, limited software and a world gone wild on the internet. Is that what we had hoped for as 2010 looms on the horizon? While all of the above were probably inevitable, how can we make the most and best of it?

First: the new MS OS, fondly known as Windows7. It's really not too bad, considering the fact that all Windows based computers work under the original handicap of the hardware created by IBM for its personal computers. I have seen my friends and loved ones switching to Apple based computers and loving every minute of it, even though Apple creates new operating systems about as often as does Microsoft. But then, most people switch for the graphics and possibly the word processing capability of Apple (Mac) machines, and perhaps are not as compelled to upgrade to a new OS like Windows customers are. Yes, our photographs are very important to us and Apple made that kind of computing a good experience many years ago.

But what about those of us who like to work with both graphics and number-crunching software? Best to stick to the unending procession of Microsoft operating systems. With powerful enough hardware, including RAM memory and a good graphics card, even Windows can do a passable job with graphics. It has always done exceptionally well with the numbers stuff. And if we can get version 7 and whatever comes next to work with our older software, then maybe we can carry on business as usual. I for one plan to give it a try. But to utilize additional RAM, we are faced with using the 64bit version of Windows 7 with a 64bit processor.

So we might not actually get as much good out of the new OS and newer photo editing software if our hardware can't meet those standards.

Second: limited software. By now most average users have all the programs they will ever use. About the only thing new many people buy is the latest, greatest antivirus program. Businesses use number crunching, word processing and data manipulation software; individuals tend to use graphics, word processing and the internet. Microsoft and Apple, and to some extent Sun Microsystems, have both categories firmly in hand, and we likely will see no new software for average users. But the old MS and Adobe stuff will continue to be "improved" in order to keep those companies in business. No need to beat that dead horse. Programs for Linux based computers are more of the same. As for huge corporations, they depend on specialists to continually fine-tune their programs in order to keep up with the competition. The industry that has developed for just that purpose is something of which most of us are not likely to have much knowledge or interest.

Third: The World Gone Wild. That is the one that worries most thinking people more than anything else. Again, it doesn't need explaining since most of the people reading this are well aware of the idiocy available on the internet. Yes, there is still some really good stuff out there, but so few people are taking advantage of it. The bad stuff, and everyone knows just how bad it is, may be the ultimate downfall of civilization as we now know it. From selling iffy goods to selling sex and extreme violence, the internet is a place where le-

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

Wednesday
January 13th, 2010

**Meeting will be held in the large meeting room.
It starts at 7:00 P.M. with club business
and a short discussion period.**

presentation on

MS Office 2010 (beta)

by

Mike Young

**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 points 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 onto 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****

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.

Chesapeake PC Users Group

**1783 Forest Drive #285
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FIRST CLASS

INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!

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... and a little bit 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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