# THE PRINTER

## Chesapeake PC Users Group

*Celebrating 25 Years of Users Helping Users*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER
### Only 18 days 'til Spring…

It's been a rough winter. But hopefully the weather will start to break soon and we can get back to our regularly scheduled meetings. At the next meeting we have *alot* going on and I hope everyone arrives early as we will be starting promptly. In addition to the meeting topics, we will have 5 subscriptions to *Smart Computing* magazines to give away. And we still have to hold elections. I do plan to run for the office again in March, but as with all offices, it is up for vote.

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

### Building Microsoft Excel macros

At the next two scheduled Technology SIG meetings, Leo Kotschenreuther will demonstrate how to build macro commands within Excel spreadsheets. This is a very useful skill and can help to increase your personal productivity.

### March 10th Meeting – Computer Buying Tips and Windows 7 Tips and Tricks

We are shifting the meeting around a little from last month. It seems that many people would like to replace their old computer, but have questions as to what to look for. Mike DeLucia & Sam Shepherd will lead a presenation on computer buying advice and some of the highlights as to what to look for.

This will act as a lead into the formal *Windows 7* course that Sam Shepherd will be teaching beginning April 6th. As folks upgrade their operating systems, many would like to know how to use all of the new features. Sam will go over some of the more interesting points that will help folks right away.

### April 14th Meeting – PhotoBook design and layout by Mike Delucia

### May 12th Meeting – Sketch Up by Kathy Walker and Bill Somers with a special guest presentation from Jonathan Brunelle

### June 2nd Meeting – Activating TechNet

More details will be forthcoming about the later meetings and as always, your input is welcome for upcoming meeting topics.

*I hope to see you at the upcoming meetings!*

*Michael*

*Just in case....*

*Inclement weather - Remember to check the Anne Arundel County Public School website - www.aacps.org/ - for school closings at the first signs of the dreaded and much feared white stuff. You can even sign up for email alerts!*

## BACKING UP - cont'd

not losing lots of time and effort trying to reconstruct things. And, when you get a new computer, your new machine can take the backup medium you used, and copy it all (as desired) onto the hard drive of the new machine.

**ONE FURTHER RECOMMENDATION TO SAVE YOUR "STUFF"**

One area that most users don't bother to consider, is the use of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). These units plug into your wall outlet, and then the computer and monitor plug into it. Many don't feel that this is of any value to them, but I'll bet that they've had a crash during a power blink. The primary use of such a device is to keep your computer and monitor running when there is a power failure, either an extended one, or momentary power blink. The purpose of a UPS is not to allow you to keep working for an extended period when the power goes off, but to allow you to save your work, and shut down in an orderly fashion. Or, when the power "blinks", your system doesn't crash, and you lose the work that you have on screen. Even a one tenth of a second blink can wipe out what you're working on. And, if you haven't just saved it, you've lost it.

Furthermore, all computers should be connected via a high end surge protector to protect against line fluctuations and power surges. A UPS is also just about the best protection that you can use here. And, these days, UPS units are available for not much more than the cost of a good surge protector. Check Costo for some good values here. A capacity of 300-500 VA is a reasonable range for most home computers. Remember, as a minimum, you need to have your computer and monitor connected via the UPS. Without a monitor, your computer isn't good for much.

So, HAPPY backing up - try it. The day will definitely come when you'll be glad you did. And once you get to be an expert at it, you can impress your friends by teaching them.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference.

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# OFFICERS

# Windows® 7

# OPERATING SYSTEM COURSE
## *Course Schedule*

The course will be given on eight consecutive Tuesdays starting on April 6, 2010. The class will meet in classroom ??? in the Severn River Middle School at 7:00 pm and will run to approximately 9:00 pm. The class will be taught using a single computer projected for all to see. The instructor will use Power Point as an aid to the lecture and the slides material will be available as a handout before class for note taking. The computer will also be available to demonstrate Windows 7. Cost of the course will be $50.00.

**Week 1 - April 6, 2010 (Tuesday after Easter)**
- Selecting your version.
- How to install and/or upgrade.
- Compatibility: Virtual Mode, XP Mode.
- User accounts & UAC.

**Week 2 - April 13, 2010**
- Compare the new look to the old:
  What are the choices?
- Start Menu: Customize, Jump List.
- Gadgets.
- Task Bar: Customize.
- Personalize the Desktop.

**Week 3 - April 20, 2010**
- Libraries, Folders, Documents, Files.
- Virtual Folders.
- Cloud computing.

**Week 4 - April 27, 2010**
- The new Windows Explorer:
  Understanding and using.
- Making it work for you.
- Customize Windows Explorer.

**Week 5 - May 4, 2010**
- New Search Tool: Use, Filter & Save.
- Configuring.
- Folder Options.
- Compressed Folders.

**Week 6 - May 11, 2010**
- Networking.
- Browsing the Web.
- E-mail.
- Live services.

**Week 7 - May 18, 2010**
- Performance tools.
- Monitoring.
- Improving memory.

**Week 8 - May 25, 2010 (Tuesday before Memorial Day)**
- File and PC backup.
- Troubleshooting.
- Third party tools, eg:
  Firefox, Security Essentials.

For additional information call:
Kathy Walker @ 410-266-6317
Sam Shepherd @ 410-647-6077

# "Disk Failure" Scare

*by*
*Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida*
*www.spcug.org*

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).

This morning, it happened again. I started the computer in the morning, as I do every morning, and staring me in the face was the dreaded "system disk failure" message. A chill went down my spine. It seemed like this happened only about a year or two years ago. When I thought further, it was 2005 when it happened, almost 5 years ago, so maybe that's not too bad. As I ate breakfast, I rapidly thought about the hardware in that computer. (I currently have 3 desktops that I am using for various activities in the home, but this was my main computer, the one other family members use.) Panic started to set-in. Were the disk drives 160GB, or 250GB? When were they installed? Were they Seagate or Western Digital? What interface is used in that computer? Are they formatted in NTFS or FAT32? Well, if it was the C: drive then it must be NTFS. I'll have to open the chassis and look at the drives. Fortunately, this story has a very happy ending. After breakfast, as I knelt down to look at the desktop chassis, to see what was the best approach to removing the cables and other things around the chassis, I spied a floppy disk in the floppy disk drive. Eureka! XP was trying to boot from the floppy: an impossible task, so it reported a disk failure, obviously. Most desktop computers today don't have a floppy disk drive, so this will probably not happen to most people. However, it got me thinking that the answers to all of the questions I had during breakfast, should be in one place, probably along with a lot of other information that defines the current computer hardware setup. So it's probably not a bad idea to gather all of this information, while the computer is operating, and put a hard copy printout in a safe place. The disk drive information is probably the most important for this kind of failure, but it is a good idea to have all the basic hardware information in one easily accessed place. Here is a list of the things that you might want to have. You may not need all of these so use only those that are pertinent to your hardware setup. (If there's anything that I've forgotten, just add it to the list, and let me know by e-mail.) I'll start with the disk drive information because that is what you'll need if the drive goes down, or you may need if you have to re-install the entire system. (By the way, you can accomplish all of this by using the free program, Belarc Advisor (http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html). Belarc produces a listing of almost all of the following pieces of information and additional information in the computer security area.)

Disk Drive 1
 Manufacturer  Typically Seagate, Western Digital, …
 Part Number  e.g. ST3160023A (Seagate part no.)
 Date Installed  May be the date of computer purchase
 Size (GB)  e.g 330GB
 Rotating Speed  e.g. 7200 RPM (or possibly 5400 RPM)
 Interface Type  IDE (Parallel ATA) or SATA
 Formatted  NTFS or FAT32
 C: drive size  Typically 25GB (for XP) or 50GB (Vista)
 D: drive size (if used)  Various
Disk Drive 2
 Same as Drive 1
CPU
 Type  e.g Intel Pentium 4, or AMD Athelon
 Speed  e.g. 3.2 GHz
 Processors  e.g. 2 Only used for multi-core processors (e.g. Intel Core Duo)
Memory
 Amount  e.g. 1GB
 Type/Speed  e.g. PC133 or

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# "Disk Failure" Scare - cont'd

DDR2, etc.
Display Adapter (If not on Motherboard)
    Manufacturer       e.g. nVidia
    Part Number       e.g. GeForce GTX295
    Other Information if needed.
Networking
    Computer Name    e.g. "Mary's Computer"
    Wired MAC address (if connected to wired Ethernet port)
            e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
    Wireless MAC address (if used on wireless network)
            e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
    Router IP address  e.g. 192.168.1.0
USB Devices
    External Drive (for Backup)
    --Manufacturer     e.g. Seagate, Western Digital, LaCie
    --Part Number     Free Agent

(Seagate part no.)
    --Date Installed     May be the date of computer purchase
    --Size (GB)        e.g. 1 TB (1,000 GB)
    --Rotating Speed   Typically 7200 RPM
    --Formatted        NTFS or FAT32
    MP3Player        e.g. Apple iPod
    --Part Number     e.g.
    --Size            e.g. 4GB
    --Other Pertinent Information
    Mouse and/or Keyboard (if connected to USB)
    Digital Camera
    --Manufacturer     e.g. Cannon
    --Part Number     e.g. Powershot SX110IS
    --MegaPixel size    e.g. 10MPixels
    --Other Pertinent Information
    Other USB Devices

Partial Belarc Advisor Printout

# Neat Things You can do with a Flash Drive

*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).

By now you're probably tired of reading about how much better Windows 7 is than Vista. me too, so let's spend some time examining some of the things you can do with a flash drive other than mere data storage. A USB flash drive consists of a flash memory data storage device integrated with a USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface. USB flash drives are easily removable, and much smaller than a floppy disk. They are rewritable, and usually weigh less than an ounce. There is a wide range of storage capacities with the most common being from 2 GB to 32 GB. Higher capacities up to 256 GB tend to be pricey.

One of the most useful things you can do with a flash drive is to run portable applications. Open Office, for example, is a free suite of programs that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, data manager, presentation tool, and drawing package. You can store the suite as a portable application, and run it on any computer that supports Windows. Firefox and Thunderbird are also available as mo bile applications.

Having office applications, email, and an internet browser all pooled in a portable drive you can carry on a key chain is a powerful combination. If you want more go to www.portableapps.com for an open source platform that works with iPods and portable hard drives in addition to flash drives. The platform is not only free, but it's a full function site. You are not limited to a trial period or a limited function subset. There is no sign in requirement, and no necessity to provide even an email address. Go for it.

Everyone wants a faster system. With either Windows Vista or Windows 7, the built-in Ready-Boost feature can speed up your computer with a USB flash drive. ReadyBoost takes the storage space on a USB flash drive and converts it into an additional memory cache that supplements the main memory cache on your primary disk drive. It can do this because flash memory is faster than regular disk drives. It's faster because it has no moving parts, and you can get a noticeable improvement in response time. Implementing ReadyBoost is simplicity itself. Insert the USB flash drive into the USB slot on your computer and follow the configuration prompts.

If you work or live in an environment where other folks have physical access to your computer you can use your flash drive to lock everyone else out of your PC. There is no built-in utility like ReadyBoost for this, but you can download a free tool called Predator from www.brothersoft.com that provides this function. Predator uses a standard USB flash drive as an access control device. After performing a short installation and configuration process, your flash disk becomes a key that will lock and unlock your PC. When you leave your PC remove the USB flash drive. This causes the screen to go blank while disabling the mouse and keyboard. When you ready to resume, put the flash drive back, and everything returns to normal. Move over, Mr. Bond, Predator is here.

All the preceding capabilities are very convenient, but how would you like to carry around a portable operating system? If you are willing to expend a little time and energy you can configure a USB flash drive to be a bootable Windows 7 drive. You will need a flash drive with a capacity of al least 8 gigabytes, and of course a Windows 7 installation disk. Start out by inserting your flash drive into its USB socket and inserting the Windows 7 installation disk in the optical drive. Please make a note of the drive letters. This is essential for successful installation.

Preparing the flash drive is the next step. Click on the Start orb and type: Diskpart

Pressing Enter opens a command window. (After typing a command at the command prompt

always press Enter to execute the command.) At the prompt type: List Disk

You will see a list of all your hard drives, partitions, optical drives, card reader drives, and flash drives. I dentify the optical drive that contains the Windows 7 installation disk and the flash drive you're working with. For this example we'll assume the flash drive is disk #4, also designated as G and the optical drive is disk #2, also designated as D.

*At the command prompt type: Select Disk 4*

*Run the following commands:*

*Clean*

*Create*

*Primary*

*Partition Select Partition 1*

*Active Format FS=FAT32*

*Assign*

*Exit*

This series of commands erased extraneous material from the flash drive, created an active primary partition, and formatted it with the FAT32 file system. The next step is to copy the Windows 7 installation files to the flash drive.

At the command prompt type: Xcopy D:*.* /S/E/F G

In this example D is the drive housing the Windows 7 installation disk and G is the USB flash drive. The command copies the installation files to the flash drive, and when it finishes you have a bootable Windows 7 flash drive. The last thing you need to do to make this work is go into the BIOS and make the first bootable device the flash drive.

Carrying a flash drive around is obviously far more convenient than carrying a DVD, and has the additional advantage of being faster than a DVD. This procedure also works for Windows Vista, but why bother when Windows 7 is here?

*Editor: See, there really is a good reason for giving out thumb drives for renewing your membership.*

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# BACKING UP AND RESTORING FILES

*by Ron Hirsch, Member and Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida*

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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).

If I had to pick a single area where most computer users are extremely lacking, it's in the area of backing up and preserving the documents and other items that they generate during the course of their computer activities. Most people just dismiss the subject with "Oh I don't really have anything of importance, and even if I do, I can always redo it easily." These people may only use their computer for the Internet and e-mail. But, redoing your address book and bookmark listing can be a task in itself.

And, if you use a program such as Quicken or Money, you have lots of financial info that would be a real job to rebuild if all your files were lost. I reminded a friend about backing up his Quicken stuff, and he said that he really didn't have to, as Quicken always backs things up automatically, which it does. But it backs things up onto the same hard drive, into a different folder. So, about 6 months later when his hard drive failed, his backup was worthless, and he was a very unhappy person.

**WHAT DOES BACKUP REALLY MEAN?**

Backup is the generation of duplicate files, often onto a removable medium, for all the things that you have generated on your machine. Generally, these are files that you have produced, not the program files which came on the CD. These duplicate files

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must be stored on something which can be separated from your machine, and definitely separated from your internal system hard drive.

Since most people have only one hard drive, it does not make good sense to backup onto that same drive. And, if you have your main drive partitioned into say a C and D drive, you will still lose your backup if the drive fails. If however, you have a second hard drive on your computer, you are much safer storing your backups there.

There are online services which offer "online backup" at a small cost, or no cost. This can offer access from another computer, when you might need that data. But I personally don't want my private data et al on an online computer, where it is possibly subject to being hacked or having that operation go out of business.

*NOTE: This article is only discussing backup of your personal files and data - it is not addressing a complete backup of your system drive, including your operating system (probably Windows). That is a separate topic which will be covered in another article.*

The backup media should be stored in a place where they it will not become lost, stolen, or damaged. When I was in business (many years ago), we backed up all our files every day, with a rotating system of seven tapes. Copies were stored in a fireproof safe, and periodically, we placed a current copy in our safety deposit box at the bank. Just putting copies on the shelf doesn't protect against their loss in case of a fire. Obviously, most users don't have to go to such extremes. But, for important information, it's a good idea to periodically put a backup copy into a secure and fireproof place, such as a home safe, or your safety deposit box.

*In order to be able to follow and use the material in this article, you must be conversant with using Windows Explorer, or a similar file manager. Earlier this year, I presented several articles on this activity, with several exercises on the subject. If you are not familiar with using a file manager to copy files and*

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*add new folders and subfolders, I would suggest that you bone up on this subject first, and then get back to this article.*

## WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO FIRST

First of all, the typical user who has programs in which files are saved, generally has no idea where they are. So, the first thing to learn is just that. When you are in a program such as Quicken, your files are generally saved in the same folder as the Quicken program. Other programs may use the My Documents folder, My Files folder, the Documents and Settings folder, or a special folder that the program has set up to store things.

I personally set my own folders for storing things. And, fortunately, most programs allow the user to specify where things are stored. In WordPerfect, I have a master folder set up, name WPWIN. Under that I have about 56 subfolders for all the categories that I have defined. There is a folder named "BocaBits", which holds all the articles I've written for this publication. One of the main advantages of having your personal files organized in a master folder is that they are easier to copy to a backup medium. Just copy the main folder, specify to include the subfolders (if that is needed), and everything underneath will be copied. This is far easier than having to locate many different folders, and copy from each one individually.

Remember, using subfolders is a must. Some years back, one of my friends stored all his files for all his programs in the same folder, with no subfolders. Finding a file to use was almost like looking for a needle in a haystack. And, name your files using descriptive long filenames which all operating systems since Windows 95 can use. Which is easier to find "Letter to Jack re the new building.doc" or "let2jreb.doc"?

Here are some steps that I would suggest users consider - change the names to suite your desires.

1.  Add a new folder on your C: drive, and call it "All My Stuff" (without the quotes.)

2.  Add as many subfolders under it as you need. For example, (assuming you have these programs) add

one for Word, Quicken, Money, Excel, etc.. Then, add as many subfolders under each of the main subfolders you've added. For example, the "Word" folder can have subfolders named "Letters", "Faxes", "IRS correspondence", etc.. (Don't use the quote marks - they are used here for clarity.)

3. Then in each of those programs go into "preferences" or "settings", or wherever is appropriate, and set your new path and folder name there as the place to keep stuff. In something like Quicken, it wants its files where it specifies, but when you call for a backup in Quicken, you can specify the path/folder. So this folder you set up will always have duplicates of Quicken's files, ready to be copied out to the removable media you choose.

4. For programs such as Outlook Express or AOL, it's a good idea to save your address book, and your bookmarks. Finding the names of these files, and where they are located will be a good exercise for you in using Windows Explorer, and learning more about your browser.

*NOTE: It is not absolutely necessary to do all of these previous steps if you're willing to do your backup work with all your files where they are now. These steps are just offered to make your job of backing up easier. If this is the case, you can skip to the section entitled "WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP."*

## HOW DO I GET MY EXISTING FILES INTO THESE NEW FOLDERS

If you don't know or can't find where the program stores the files you create, go into the program, generate a new document, and do a save on it. When the "save" window comes up, it may well show you the path/folder that the program uses. So you can now go to that folder, and find all the stuff you have done previously. While you're in the "save" window, you can now specify your new repository for your files in this program, assuming it will cooperate.

If this does not happen, do a search in Windows (START>SEARCH) to find that file, and the location path will be available there.

Rather than move the existing files, I'd copy them into the new folder you set up. That way, if there are any "goofs" (perish forbid), nothing has really been lost. In the case of a program like Quicken, just open Quicken, and press CTRL+B. This should open the backup window, and you can type in the path/folder you've just made.

Later on, when you know that everything has been safely copied into your new folder tree, you can safely delete the files in their original locations if you want to do so.

When you've done this for all your important stuff, you will now have a new "filing cabinet" with "drawers" for all your important files.

## WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP?

In the "olden days", the choices were fairly limited. Floppy disks and tapes were about it. These days, those two media are not the ones of choice. Floppies have limited storage space, and most people don't have a tape drive, nor should they bother to get one these days.

The two choices that I would recommend are external USB drives, which many people have or flash drives which many people also may have. If you're not familiar with these devices, you should become familiar - they are very inexpensive now and are the perfect media for backing up purposes, transporting, and archiving files.. Or you can use a ZIP disk, if you have a ZIP drive, or use a CD rewritable disk.

To "burn" a CD, you must be familiar with this process. If you have a recordable or rewriteable drive on your machine, there should be a software utility to handle copying files. Usually this utility is on the CD that came with your hardware. But, it's possible that the utility wasn't loaded on at the factory. Check through the manual or help files to learn more about this.

Remember, once you get into the habit of backing things up, you can feel more comfortable about

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

# Wednesday
# March 10th, 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*
# Computer Buying Tips
*by*
# Mike DeLucia & Sam Shepherd
# &
# Windows 7 Tip & Tricks

*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**
**Annapolis, MD 21401**

**FIRST CLASS**

**INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!**

**President's Corner**
**Windows 7 Course**
**Neat Things**
**"Disk Failure" Scare**
**... 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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