

# THE PRINTER

Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### Magic Jack

At the April meeting the users group authorized me to purchase a Magic Jack VOIP telephone device. I did and, in short, it works. In the fall I will do a full meeting on recent telecommunications trends and technologies. In the meantime, I will bring the device and a telephone to a couple of meetings so you can try it yourself. Be sure to bring phone numbers of friends and family out of state, as long distance charges are included with the Magic Jack!

### May 13 meeting – Computer Security

Always stay vigilant against threats to your data. We have covered the topic of computer security in the past, but a refresher is always good to have. At the May meeting we will review some of the latest techniques to secure your computers. This is more than just installing a couple of programs and being done with it. We will discuss and demonstrate how to properly secure your environment.

Some of the products that will be demonstrated are as follows:



### Windows

Defender is software that helps protect your computer

against pop-ups, slow performance, and security threats caused by spyware and other unwanted software, by detecting and removing known spyware from your computer. Windows Defender features Real-Time Protection, a monitoring system that recommends actions against spyware when it's detected, minimizes interruptions, and helps you stay productive.



### AVG Anti-

Virus/Anti-

Malware is one

of the most popular, free, anti-virus/anti-malware products out there. The latest versions expand on more than just the anti-virus, it checks web links and checks for spyware. The recent scan engine has been revamped to scan faster and more efficiently.

### June 3 meeting – Wireless networking

Before we break for the summer, Craig Barlow will discuss wireless networking your PCs.

One of the more important aspects is securing

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Cont'd

your wireless connectivity. In addition, Craig will review the latest wireless technology and what it means to you. Please bring your laptop to participate in this meeting. Your help is necessary.

## September 9 – Windows 7 Released!

While this isn't in stone, all signs point toward the release version of the Windows 7 operating system to be released by September and we'll have a full meeting focused on this operating system.

## Thumb drive member appreciation gifts

I hope that everyone who received a thumb drive at the previous meetings finds a lot of use with the drives. Those who did not receive one at a previous meeting, we will have more thumb drives available to members in good standing at the next meeting.

Meetings are really starting to become interesting, so I hope you can attend as many as possible. Also, I hope you participate in the meetings as well.

## Late Breaking News

**April 30th - Microsoft Technotes just announced that Windows 7 RC (Release Candidate) available as a download to their TechNet subscribers. Also available, Windows Virtual PC Beta with Windows XP Mode Beta which enables you to run many of your Windows XP productivity applications from your Windows 7 desktop.**

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# For immediate release

Contact: Katerina Kharina  
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AKVIS Sketch 8.6: Photo-to-Sketch Conversion.  
Improved Watercolor Technique.

April 1, 2009 - AKVIS Software Inc. announces the release of AKVIS Sketch v.8.6 for Windows and Macintosh. The software converts photos to pencil drawings and watercolor paintings. Version 8.6 improves the way a photo is converted into a watercolor painting and fixes the compatibility bug that caused the Sketch plugin to crash on Macintosh computers+Photoshop CS3,CS4. It also improves plugin compatibility on Windows and adds support of 32 bit images to the plugin (earlier available only in the standalone version). Upgrade for registered users is free.

AKVIS Sketch is an award-winning program for conversion of photos into pencil sketches and watercolor paintings. Make any photo look like a B&W or color drawing, imitate the technique of graphite or color pencil, charcoal or watercolor painting.

The program works in an entertaining way. It allows observing the conversion of a photo into a drawing/watercolor in real time and even interrupting the process when the required result is achieved.

Once you have converted your photo into a drawing, you can add some special effects (the Background tab). Create a blend of a drawing and a photo; imitate motion or add “time machine effect” by swirling the background. Put an accent to certain parts of the image by blurring the rest of it in an artistic way. It proves especially useful when the final drawing contains too many details on the background that divert attention.

Besides, the parameters on the Canvas tab allow adding a rough surface to your image, as if it has been drawn on canvas, corrugated paper, brick wall, etc.  
It is also possible to add a signature or a greeting to your pencil drawings to personalize the work of art.

Version 8.6. of AKVIS Sketch improves the way a photo is converted into a watercolor painting and fixes the compatibility bug that caused the Sketch plugin to crash on Macintosh computers+Photoshop CS3,CS4. It also improves plugin compatibility on Windows and adds support of 32 bit images to the plugin (earlier available only in the standalone version).

Many photo editing enthusiasts have already appreciated the Sketch’s features. Take a look at the examples gallery (many created by users) at <http://akvis.com/en/sketch/examples-pencil-drawing.php>

Sketch can be useful on many occasions. Surprise your friends and relatives by presenting them their pencil portraits. Make a watercolor drawing out of a photo from your last nature shooting to decorate your room. Convert your own photo into a color sketch to print on a T-shirt. Create a comic out of your party videos.

The program can be helpful to designers who need to quickly bring images to one style for a web-site or an advertisement booklet.

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Using batch processing in Photoshop or Paint Shop pro (only for the plug-in version) you can even convert a film into a cartoon. Like here: <http://akvis.com/en/sketch-tutorial/cartoon-film.php>

For a free trial, AKVIS offers 10 days of fully functional use. Details are available at <http://akvis.com/en/sketch/index.php>

Upgrade for registered users is free.

AKVIS Sketch is available as a stand-alone application, as well as a plugin to a photo editor.

The plugin version of AKVIS Sketch is compatible with Adobe Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, Corel Painter, Corel Photo-Paint, and Paint Shop Pro, ACD FotoCanvas, and Ulead PhotoImpact. AKVIS Sketch runs on Microsoft Windows 2000/2003/XP/Vista and on Macintosh Mac OS X 10.4-10.5, PowerPC/Intel.

AKVIS Sketch Home License (plug-in or standalone) sells for \$72 USD or 55 Euro, downloadable from [www.akvis.com](http://www.akvis.com). Home users can enjoy the full line of AKVIS plugins in the AKVIS Alchemy bundle (Sketch, Chameleon, Stamp, Retoucher, Coloriage, Noise Buster, Decorator, Enhancer, LightShop, Smart-Mask, ArtSuite, Magnifier and ArtWork) for USD \$325 USD, huge savings over purchasing each separately.

Also AKVIS Sketch comes bundled with AKVIS ArtWork (photo-to-oil painting software) and AKVIS ArtSuite (frames and effects) with a discount of 44 USD in the Artistic Bundle.

For business licenses consult the official web-site. One license key allows activating the software on two computers, for example, on a desktop and a laptop.

More information about AKVIS Sketch:

<http://akvis.com/en/sketch/index.php>

Direct evaluation download URL:

Windows (plugin + standalone):

<http://download.akvis.com/akvis-sketch-setup.exe>

Macintosh (standalone version):

<http://download.akvis.com/akvis-sketch-app.dmg>

Macintosh (plugin for Photoshop CS3, CS4):

<http://download.akvis.com/akvis-sketch-plugin.dmg>

Macintosh (plugin for older versions of Photoshop):

<http://download.akvis.com/akvis-sketch-legacy.dmg>

Screenshot URL:

<http://akvis.com/en/sketch/screenshots-pencil-drawing.php>

Examples of Using:

<http://akvis.com/en/sketch/examples-pencil-drawing.php>

# Things, Thinglets & Thingassos

by

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## CLEANING YOUR COMPUTER

During the summer you had your hands full cleaning your yard and patio. In the fall you winterized your home and prepared for the holidays. Now that all of that is over, it's time to spring clean your computer. When was the last time you opened up your "box" and looked inside? Don't tell me!

I found a very thorough guide explaining how to clean, what tools you need, why you should clean and yes, how often you should clean, courtesy of Computer Hope at [www.computer-hope.com/cleaning.htm#00](http://www.computer-hope.com/cleaning.htm#00).

Let me know what you found inside your box—I dare you! Is it still alive?

## THE TINY MIRACLE

Have you ever received via e-mail, a URL like this:

```
http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-  
q=Gang&getit=Go&sp-a=00062d45-  
sp00000000&sp-  
advanced=1&sp-p=all&sp-w-control=1&sp-  
w=alike&sp-date-range=-1&sp-x=any&sp-  
c=100&sp-m=1&sp-s=0
```

... with only the top line underlined and in blue?

And when you clicked on it you got an "error 404," or did not get the website you expected?

That's because the URL should have included all four lines. You need to copy the whole thing (all four lines), and paste it into your browser, making sure that you do not introduce

any spaces. A few websites are configured so that their URLs don't break, but not very many bother to do this.

I am guilty of sending long URLs via MBUG Listserv (see the back page to find out how to register). This has caused some of our members to be confused by the split URL. I appreciate the fact that recently someone took the time to remind me about a great solution for this problem. Years ago I knew about this but completely forgot (you can call it my "senior moment").

One solution is Tiny URL or [www.tinyurl.com](http://www.tinyurl.com). All you have to do is go to that URL and create a shortcut for future use. The instructions are simple:

1. Copy the giant URL.
2. Paste it in the slot provided by Tiny.
3. Click on the button provided.

And, like magic, the long four line URL becomes tiny, is automatically copied to your clipboard, and looks more like <http://tinyurl.com/52fuz2>. Surprised? Try it, you'll like it, and it's FREE! By the way, some time ago Tiny URL was reported to contain malware, however the manufacturer assures us that the problem has been rectified.

Also, another MBUG member suggests to try adding "< >" brackets to prevent URLs from falling apart.

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Another program similar to Tiny URL is at [www.webware.com/8301-1\\_109-9898698-2.html?tag=bl](http://www.webware.com/8301-1_109-9898698-2.html?tag=bl) (or I could say: <http://tinyurl.com/57dqyk>)!

## ARE YOU THE ADMINISTRATOR?

If you need to quickly tell if you are currently logged onto a PC as a Local Administrator of the Windows server, right click on the "Start" button. If you see "Open All Users" rather than just "Open," the account is in the Local Administrators group.

## MANUAL! MANUAL! MY KINGDOM FOR A MANUAL!

Have you had an instant when you had a question or a problem with one of your 21st century electronic gadgets and the dog ate the manual? Have no fear bunky, SmartComputing to the rescue! Go to [www.retrevo.com/samples/index.html](http://www.retrevo.com/samples/index.html).

## WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

### Credit Cards

While two credit cards might act and look alike, levels of consumer protection that each type of credit card provides can be different. Under federal law, if someone steals your credit card you're only responsible to pay the first \$50 of unauthorized charges. However, if you notify the credit card issuer before a thief is able to make any charges, you may be free from all liability. If the credit card is not physically present when an unauthorized or fraudulent purchase is made (such as over the Internet), you're also free from liability for those charges.

MasterCard and Visa offer zero-liability protection where you don't have to pay any charges if someone uses your credit card to make

an unauthorized purchase. Many credit cards offer additional benefits and supply a yearly summary of your spending.

### Debit Cards

A debit card is a direct key to your bank account. The protection offered for debit card fraud is similar to credit cards but with a few exceptions. For example, your liability under federal law is limited to \$50, the same as for a credit card, but only if you notify the issuer within two business days of discovering the card's loss or theft. Your liability for debit card fraud can jump up to \$500 if you don't report the loss or theft within that time.

Debit cards provide a direct pass to your bank account. You may also face cash flow problems and bounced-check fees when thieves clean out your bank accounts.

If you are the type of person who gives a passing glance to your monthly bank statement, you could be totally liable for any fraudulent debit card charges if you wait 60 days or more from the time your statement is mailed.

Visa and MasterCard zero-liability protection applies to your debit card with them but only for transactions that do not involve the use of your PIN (personal identification number).

Additional protection against fraudulent use of your credit or debit cards may be available through your homeowner's or renter's insurance. Check your policy or with your agent for more information about your coverage.

You should avoid using your debit card for any online purchase or for things which are expensive. Why? The main reason is that it is much

# Smart Computing Tips & Fun Facts

- **Monitor Your Accounts Online:** To protect yourself from identity theft, check your bank accounts and credit cards online every day - if anything strange happens with one of your accounts, such as a purchase you didn't make, you'll notice it within a day or two. According to the 2009 Identity Fraud Survey Report from Javelin Strategy And Research, most people typically don't realize they've been the victim of an identity theft until 34 days after the initial crime; what's more sobering is that if someone else discovers the breach, typically 102 days have transpired since the criminal first invaded your account.

- **Make Your Cell Phone Battery Last Longer:** Problems with GPS (global positioning system) devices never come at a convenient time. Most often, buildings, mountains, and other large structures block sufficient access to GPS satellite signals. If this happens to you, patience is key. After you travel through a dead spot, the device should pick up the satellite signal again and get you back on track. Actively finding an area with open sky should help you get back on track quicker. You can also try facing to the south because many GPS satellites are positioned in the southern area of the sky. The eastern and western parts of the sky have some satellites, and there are very few satellites in the north.

- **Clean Your Touchscreen:** Devices with touchscreens, such as an iPod touch, a GPS (global positioning system) unit, and even some camera LCDs (liquid-crystal displays), often get pretty dirty and have obvious fingerprint marks. To clean your touchscreen, turn off the device, then wipe it with a soft cotton cloth. Be sure to use an up and down motion when doing so and don't use paper towels, as they can destroy the polarizer. If you want, you can spray a nonammonia-based glass cleaner onto the CLOTH, not the actual screen, and make sure it is only slightly damp, not dripping wet.

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***Remember to buy all your Smart Computing magazines subscriptions from ChPCUG!***



# Computer Speed, RAM and Virtual Memory

by

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One of the more frequent questions raised is: "will adding more physical memory (RAM), speed up my computer"? The answer is a qualified "maybe". The first thing you need to be aware of are the built-in bottlenecks that can slow down your computer. Programs and data move through your computer at different speeds in different locations. The central processor (CPU) is usually the fastest data handler in the system. The hard drive is the slowest and everything else, including the RAM, is intermediate in data handling speed. The speed of processing data in RAM is measured in billionths of a second, or nanoseconds, and the speed of accessing data on the hard disk is measured in thousandths of a second, or milliseconds. So, ideally, you want all the processing to go from RAM to the CPU and back to RAM. Unfortunately, that's not always possible even if your system has the maximum amount of RAM installed.

Every computer running Windows, from several generations back, uses "virtual memory" in addition to RAM. The definition of "virtual memory" is based on redefining the address space to "trick" programs into thinking they are using large blocks of contiguous memory. Virtual memory is a space on the hard drive, frequently called a "swap file" or "page file". This is a block that is mapped for temporary storage of programs, data, and operating system essentials. This technique gives an application program the impression that it has contiguous

working memory (address space), while in fact it may be physically fragmented.

Virtual memory was designed at a time when RAM was much more expensive than space on a hard drive. Even though RAM is now much less expensive, the latest versions of Windows (XP & Vista) still depend on virtual memory. In fact, much of the operating system kernel ends up in virtual memory. This kernel memory also controls the allocation of data to virtual memory. Consequently, it is not really possible to eliminate virtual memory when you are running Windows XP or Vista. If you do disable virtual memory, Windows becomes unstable.

In a 32 bit computer running Windows, the maximum memory that can be accessed by the CPU is 4 gigabytes (2<sup>32</sup>). It can not access addresses beyond 4 gigabytes (GB). (A gigabyte is a billion bytes) Not every computer can accept 4 GB of RAM. Some older computers are limited to 512 megabytes (MB) and still run Windows XP quite successfully. However, if you have a newer computer whose motherboard can accept 4 GB of RAM, you may not be able to fully access all of that RAM. In some cases, RAM is shared with the graphics system. This is usually referred to as an "integrated graphics card". In such a case, up to 1 GB of your RAM may be used by the graphics leaving only 3 GB for the rest of the system. Then Windows takes 2 GB of space leaving only 1 GB for user space (programs and data). Even if some of this is placed

## Computer Speed, RAM and Virtual Memory - cont'd

in Virtual memory, the CPU still has only 4 GB of addresses. If you have a graphics card with its own memory, Windows will allocate 2 GB to kernel memory and 2 GB to user memory. Since some of the kernel memory will be in virtual memory, your total memory will be a combination of physical memory (RAM) and virtual memory (hard drive), but the total will not exceed 4 GB in a 32 bit computer. Remember, the 4 GB limit applies to the number of addresses that can be accessed by the CPU. Those addresses can be on the graphics card, the hard drive or in physical memory (RAM).

Windows sets up the memory system by dividing memory into pages. The most recently accessed pages are in RAM. Any pages that have not been referenced in a while are written to the file on the hard drive. According to Microsoft the paging file in a 32 bit system can be a maximum of 16 terabytes (one terabyte equals 1000 gigabytes). So the total virtual memory pagefile system can exceed the 4 GB limit by a considerable amount. However, no more than the 4 GB can be actively handled at time. The inactive pages are stored on the hard drive.

Virtual memory not only operates at the speed of the hard disk data access, it also requires special handling before it can be used by the CPU or sent to the video screen. Pages on the hard disk have to be read into RAM to be used. That also means that the space they will take in RAM must be vacated. If there was data there, it must be written to the hard drive, before the new pages can be read into RAM. This paging process must also be managed. Some memory is used just to keep track of which pages are in RAM and which are in virtual memory. This is

the role of the Virtual Memory Manager. All of these processes of reading and writing to and from RAM require time. As a result, virtual memory use does slow the computer more than the amount that is just due to the slower speed of disk access.

Before you decide that you need 4 GB of RAM to solve your speed problem, you need to determine how much RAM your computer is designed to accept. Computers in today's market are sold with anywhere from 1- 4 GB of RAM. However, only a few years ago, computers were designed to accept a maximum of 1 GB of RAM or less. So you need to check your owners manual to see what the maximum RAM is for your computer. Then, if you don't know how much is installed in your computer, bring up the the device manager window from the control panel. The first page will tell you how much physical memory you have in your system. You can also see the distribution of physical memory and virtual memory by bringing up the task manager (Ctrl-Alt-Del) and clicking on the Performance tab.

There are several other possible solutions to this problem. One is to look at your hard drive. If you have an older computer with an IDE drive, replacing it with a drive that has a SATA interface will speed up the data handling in virtual memory. Another change would be to purchase a graphics card with 256 – 512 MB of RAM and install it in place of the integrated video. That would release the RAM that was being shared with the video card.

The best, and most expensive, alternative for speeding up your computer is to replace your 32 bit computer with a 64 bit system. The 64 bit computers

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## Computer Speed, RAM and Virtual Memory - cont'd

can access 16 exabytes of RAM (264). That is 16 million GB of RAM. Most of the 64 bit computers in todays market do limit physical RAM to anywhere from 8 to 256 terabytes. Not that we're getting into any really large numbers here, but the amount of RAM in a 64 bit machine is more than adequate to reduce virtual memory to a bare minimum. The catch is that 64 bit machines have other problems, especially with the limited availability of 64 bit software and drivers for peripheral devices. So before you decide to switch to 64 bit computing you need to check out whether or not drivers are available for your peripherals.

Finally, if your hard drive is heavily fragmented, this will also slow down data reading and writing. Simply defragmenting your drive will speed up the drive input and output. It may also improve the computer's boot time. As you can see, there are a number of things to consider if you need to speed up your computer.

*Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.*



Date	Venue	City	State
May 09-10	Maryland State Fairgrounds,	Timonium	MD
May 16-17	Capital Club House - Waldorf Marketplace,	Waldorf	MD
May 23-24	Audrey E Moore RECenter,	Annandale	VA
May 30-31	Maryland City Plaza,	Laurel	MD

As a service to our members, I will attempt to publish the current schedule for computer shows in our immediate area. For additional information & to print the \$\$ OFF coupon go to:

<http://www.marketproshows.com/computershows/citySearch.php>

easier to dispute a charge when you use your credit card. If the gold-plated, limited-edition, hip-swinging Elvis wall clock arrives broken, your credit card company will remove the charge until the problem is resolved. With your debit card you are stuck dealing with the merchant directly to resolve any problems with a purchase. Don't fall for rumors about not signing your cards—all banks insist that you are much safer signing your cards immediately upon receiving them.

Just to make sure that you have all the necessary information should you become a victim of stolen or lost cards and other important documents:

1. Empty your wallet.
2. Place all your credit/debit cards and important documents on your scanner or copying machine.
3. Make copies of your cards, front and back.
4. Place the copy in a safe place: a safety deposit box, fire safe, or even your refrigerator is better than a desk drawer (in case of fire, the chances for survival of contents in your refrigerator are pretty good).
5. Check your wallet periodically. Thieves often steal just one credit card to make sure that you don't notice it's gone. By the time you notice, it's too late.

**Note: When you give your card to a person to pay a bill, make sure that when you get it back it's your card and not an expired card belonging to someone else!**

One last precaution: **NEVER** carry your Social Security card around with you.

## THE THIRD GENERATION OF USB

Many of you recall the old USB (Universal Serial Bus) 1.1. Its time passed when the much faster USB 2.0 was invented—it's the USB we all use now to connect our peripherals (mouses, printers, flash drives, etc.).

Last November we were given some good news:

Good news #1: by 2010 we will be able to buy USB 3.0.

Good news #2: it will be 10 times faster than USB 2.0 and it will feature improved power efficiency.

Good news #3: USB 3.0 will be backwards compatible with USB 2.0 and 1.1 devices, which means that we will have time to upgrade our peripheral devices when we are ready.



photo: Bill Hyley, MBUG-PC

**Editor: When I travel out of the country, I leave a copy of my passport and visas with a friend. If they are lost or stolen, I can get the copies emailed or faxed to to me where ever I am in the world. Then I can start the fun process of getting them replaced.**

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

**Wednesday**  
**May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

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 Security**

*by*

**Michael 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.



1783 Forest Drive #285  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**FIRST CLASS**

**INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!**

President's Corner  
Akvis Sketch 8.6  
Tip & Fun Facts  
Computer Speed  
T & T & T  
... and nothing 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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