

Is the whole world going wireless?

Fire2Wire, the Modesto PC User Group's new web site host, will offer a program on the wireless craze that's sweeping the computer world, when the group meets on Thursday, Feb. 26.

Doing the presenting will be the Fire2Wire's vice president, Ryan Severson, who will cover wireless local area networks, hotspots and high speed wireless internet access.

In addition to its Internet services, Fire2Wire hosts a weekly radio program at 10 a.m. Saturday on KFIV to answer questions about computers and the Internet. Questions may be submitted via email to info@fire2wire.com. Live questions are accepted by telephone during the broadcast at 1 800 720-5348.

In a special offer to any MPCUG member needing an

ISP, Fire2Wire has agreed to provide three free months of service for a year's subscription.

Fire2Wire, doing business in Modesto for 17 years, offers an array of connection services, domain registration, web site hosting and high speed wireless, according to Duane Severson, company founder. The firm also will do Internet-related computer repairs and evaluate whether upgrading a computer will be cost-effective.

The Random Access question-answer SIG will meet prior to the general meeting at 6:30 p.m. The Fire2Wire program is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are held in the gymnasium behind St. Paul's Episcopal Church on the southeast corner of Briggsmore Avenue and Oakdale Road.

For meeting location see
inside back page
Next Meeting
Thursday,
February 26,
Random Access SIG
6:30pm
Meeting at 7:30 pm

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Next board meeting

Come have dinner with the board at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 2nd, at Ridgeway's Restaurant, Modesto.

Be sure and check our website at least once a week: www.mpcug.net

Modesto PC User Group Officers

President Sid Losher 545-0853 president@mpcug
Program VP Elizabeth Leedom 523-4218 vp@mpcug
Secretary Linda Kerwood 869-8657 secretary@mpcug.net
Treasurer Barbara Cameron 522-1389 treasurer@mpcug.net
Director At Large Hank Mudge 529-1936 dal@mpcug.net

Appointed positions:

SIG Coordinator Bud Bondietti 667-1980 sig@mpcug.net
Press Relations Elizabeth Leedom 523-4218 vp@mpcug.net
Membership Sid Losher 545-0853 membership@mpcug.net
Web Master Jim Goodman 579-0122 webmaster@mpcug.net
Editor Bud Bondietti 667-1980 editor@mpcug.net

PC Post

Editor: Bud Bondietti

Editor Emeritus: William "Doc" Holloway - 1920 - 1996
Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus, 537-9604 — EE@mpcug.net
Bud Bondietti and Elizabeth Leedom, Presidents Emeritus

Join The Modesto PC User Group

Web site: www.mpcug.net

To join MPCUG (or just get more information about us go to our Web site and fill out the new member form or mail your check to: MPCUG, P.O. Box 5122, Modesto, CA 95352-5122. Membership is just \$24 a year and includes 12 issues of the PC Post along with participation in all meetings and events. You will also receive e-mail advising you of extra events or news.

The PC Post and Editorial Policy

The PC Post is published 12 times per year and is sent to all group members as a membership benefit. Annual group membership dues are \$24.

For information write:

Modesto PCUG PO Box 5122, Modesto, CA 95352-5122

Opinions expressed in the PC Post do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the members as a group or the Board of Directors.

The PC Post encourages group members to submit articles for publication. We would like to have articles which deal with the writer's experience with computer hardware and software.

An article may deal with any computer-related subject provided it contains no libelous or offensive material. We can't use information copied from other publications without written permission except for quotes.

Articles should be submitted in MS Word text. Do not spend time formatting your article such as indents or centering. Please use only one space between sentences. and do not use bold, italicize or otherwise format the submission as we can't guarantee results in translation to Publisher. Proof read

and run your spelling checker. Watch for special upper and lower case in brand names. Do not tab or indent to layout text.

If you want to include a graphic, please contact the editor for instructions.

We reserve the right to edit articles, for length or to improve readability. Longer articles may be published in several parts. We will not knowingly promote unlicensed businesses.

Letters to the editor are encouraged. All articles and letters to the editor should be submitted to the editor via email as an attached file. Call him at 492-0391 before submission. Please include your name, day and evening phone numbers, and email address for contact.

The MPCUG exchanges some articles with other user groups around the country via the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG). If for any reason you object to having your article distributed to APCUG member organizations for re-printing, please notify the editor at the time you submit the article. Your wish will in no way affect publication of your article in the Post.

Production notes: Prepared using **Microsoft Publisher 2003**, MS Office 2003 Professional, Minolta laser printer and a lot of sweat and tears.

Hank Mudge, director at large, has taken on the task of membership chairman. Any email addresses or other corrections to your membership should be given to Hank. Hank and Frank Henrich, Welcome chairman, will be at the reception table. Thanks for supporting our club.

We should all know how to file our tax returns with the fine program last month by Bud Bondiotti on Turbo Tax.

A nominating committee needs to be selected this month. The president needs to appoint a chairperson. Please let me know if you might be interested. The board will elect a second member and the

club will elect a third member. Only one member of the committee may be a board member. The committee will report to the May general meeting. Election will be held at the June general meeting. Please become involved in your club. Do not leave the running of the club to just a few. Too many times the "few" have to do the work over and over again. Thanks to Ray Nichols for the labels for meeting dates to be put on calendars.

The board meeting has been changed to the first Tuesday of the month following the general meeting. 6:30 Ridgeway's restaurant, Modesto.

Vice President's Corner

By Elizabeth Leedom

Women's SIG

Eight members of the MPCUG Women's Special Interest Group met on the fourth Friday of January for dessert and coffee.

They made up an agenda for three months' worth of presentations and confirmed that they will meet on the fourth Friday of each month at 7 p.m.

Plans call for a program on Family Tree at Wilma Martin's home in Ceres on Friday, Feb. 27.

On March 26, the group will go to Gaye Bishop's in Modesto for a program on selling on EBay.

On April 23, members will meet at Linda Kenwood's in Riverbank for a program on buying on EBay.

Other program possibilities discussed include searching the Internet and handling Quicken, Excel,

scanners and Microsoft Publisher newsletters.

In addition, SIG members talked about learning more about faxing and Word.

The group decided generally to stick to informal discussions and only occasionally to call a presenter with more expertise.

To join or put your name on the women's SIG contact list, email Elizabeth Leedom at leedom@sbcglobal.net. Leedom plans to email the list immediately prior to each program with location directions.

At our next meeting

These prizes will be awarded:

Microsoft Digital Image 9 Suite
Microsoft Works Suite 2004
Microsoft Zoo Tycoon

Using the MPCUG website!

For those of you who haven't made it a practice to check the MPCUG website, you are losing out on a club feature, especially during these times of fast need-to-know breaking news on viruses and computer attacks. There is also more information there than can be put in the PC Post, including important links.

Make it a practice to go to www.mpcug.net regularly.

PC Annoyances

While having lunch at an Internet Café in Turlock (yes, Turlock has an Inet Café) I overheard a user complaining about an annoyance that he was having and asked if anyone there could solve the problem. The guy who oversees the site said “Yes, I could solve that problem for you.” I just happened to have read about that same annoyance in a book by Steve Bass of the Pasadena IBM User Group and wondered if he had read the same book when he says, “If I tell you then I’d have to Ctrl + Z (undo) you”.

Steve’s new book is chock full of minor annoyances and how to fix them. The book is available locally at Borders, Barnes & Noble and at the publisher’s website, www.oreilly.com. It lists for \$19.95, which is a small price to pay for such a

wealth of information, in addition to the fact that there are additional websites listed in the book so that you can download the different utilities mentioned. The book is written in a language that is understandable by both the novice and advanced PC user. IMHO (in my humble opinion) it’s an excellent alternative to the RTFM (read the “funky” manual) advice that usually goes along with a cry for help.

At press time, I haven’t gone through the whole book, but in what I’ve read, I have discovered the solution to at least four annoyances that I’ve been experiencing. It is truly nice to have all of these solutions at one’s fingertips instead of trying to remember where you saw that fix somewhere else.

Thanks Steve, it’s a great help.

Some Useful Sites

Here’s a list of some useful websites that I have found:

Google – One of if not the best search engine available on the Internet.

www.google.com

Ask Jeeves – A handy website for searching using common sentences

www.ask.com

Tech TV – The home site of TV’s most popular computer/technical show

www.techtv.com

2 Wire – Want to check your Internet speed, here is one of many sites to do it.

www.2wire.com

Arts and Home – A locally sponsored site featuring information on things for your home and art.

www.artsandhome.com

Computer Swap Meets – One of the largest Computer Swap Venues in our area.

www.marketpro.com

O’Reilly – An online computer book store

www.oreilly.com

Maps, Directions and Mileage—For those of us who

By Bud Bondiotti

are afraid to ask directions.

maps.yahoo.com/

www.maps.com/

Phone Directory online—Save a quarter and find it yourself

www.anywho.com/

www.superpages.com/

California Businesses for Sale—Ever wished to be your own boss?

www.small-biz-network.com/

california_businesses.htm

Computer Groups on the Web—Find other groups with your same interests

www.apcug.org/

easyrvp.com/ugotw/

Online Auctions—Bid for the best bargains online

www.ebay.com/

www.ubid.com/

auctions.yahoo.com/

www.online-auctions.net/

Got a suggestion for your favorite website?

Email it to editor@mpcug.net and let the rest of us in on your favorite site. We will give each user a plug for their help.

How To Make The Toolbar, YOUR Toolbar

by **Patricia Hill**, Computer Booters of Sun Lakes, AZ

Do you find yourself having to access drop down menus and clicking several times to perform repetitive tasks in the Microsoft Office product line? Did you know the toolbar is highly customizable? If the toolbar contains icons you never use - and don't think you will ever use - get rid of them! If you are looking for an easier way - with fewer mouse clicks - to do certain things, then add an icon to the toolbar. Here's how- (This article was written using MS Word 2002; the instructions are similar, if not the same, for previous versions of Word and other Office products.)

Procedure:

Select Tools, Customize from the menu bar. You'll see three tabs in the Customize window; Toolbars, Commands and Options. Notice there is a check mark next to the toolbars that are always displayed when you enter Word. In the Toolbars tab select the toolbar you want to customize. It's probably the Standard Toolbar. Once you've selected the Standard Toolbar (it will be highlighted or colored in), go to the Commands tab.

Example:

Let's add a File Save As button. File should already be selected in the left Categories pane. Scroll down the right Commands pane in the Customize window until you see Save As Drag and drop the button to where you want it in the toolbar. Select Save As... by holding down the left mouse button. Still holding down the button, drag the button to where you want it on the toolbar and release the mouse button. Now you're looking at lots of buttons and something that says Save As... This isn't exactly what you'd like to see, so let's modify it. It takes a few steps, but you'll be glad you took the time to do it. Click the Modify Selection bar; then Default Style. The Default Style is a button that shows the button activity when you hover your mouse over it. The button is now blank. Click Modify Selection again and then Change Button Image. Click on the piggy bank, the third object from the left on the top row. Your button now shows the piggy bank icon. It's a boring piggy bank - so color it in.

Select Modify Selection bar a final time and Edit Button Image... Pick a color and hold down your left mouse button and color the piggy bank. There's a

small preview pane that's rather useless and you can move the icon within the button boundaries using the arrows. If you're not sure in which Category a function you're looking for resides, scroll down the Category pane to All Commands and click on that.

New Button with Icons:

If you want to add a new button that already has an icon, repeat the instructions in paragraph 3. Let's add the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons to the Standard Toolbar. Click on Format in the left pane of the Customize window. Scroll down the right pane until you see the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons. Select them one at a time and drag and drop them to where you want them on the tool bar. Because there is an icon already available, that's all you have to do. You don't have to mess with modifying it and selecting the Default Style.

Delete Icon:

To delete any icons you don't think you'll use, drag and drop the icon to anywhere in the Customize window. The key is to have the Customize window open. If you decide you want to put it back, reverse the process. Another way to delete or add icons from the toolbar is to click on the down arrow at the far right of any tool bar. Click on Add or Remove Buttons and then Standard Toolbar. You'll see a list of all icons currently displayed on the Standard Toolbar. Some are black and some are grayed out. The black ones are the original toolbar setup when you first installed Word. The gray ones are the ones you used to customize your toolbar. If you want to add an original button to the toolbar, click on it and it'll move to the toolbar. If you want to remove buttons, then click on them and they disappear from the toolbar. Remember, though, if you want to group your buttons differently than Microsoft originally set them up, the Tools, Customize window must be open.

Conclusion

Drag, drop, customize, modify to your heart's content. Set up your programs so that they make sense to you and are easier for you to use. Make the toolbar YOUR toolbar.

Patricia Hill is the Review Editor Computer Booters of Sun Lakes, Arizona.

Claude's Bytes by **Claude Delphia, editor emeritus**

Computer monitors — As with the TV plasma monitors, huge computer monitors are also the rage. One of those is the 16 x 9 ratio screen by Apple. It is 23-inch screen with 1920 x 1200 resolution and I've seen it in use. It is eye popping.

But I quickly realized some limitations. The problem is applications which can use that much width. One issue is the average page we compose text on, which is 8½ x 11-inch. How soon do you think we will stop using 8½ x 11 paper? That question seems like a total change of subject, but the issue is, how well does that format work on these big and extra wide monitors? Apple suggests that you would put two pages side by side. That sounds good, but is it worth the cost? The Apple is listed at \$1,999 but is selling for two-thirds that amount. But that's still pretty high just for two pages of text.

There are other applications where this kind of large and wide screen can be of help. This is particularly true for two areas of computer work — graphics and spreadsheets. Apple even touts this factor for spreadsheets. However, this would have to be pretty serious spreadsheet work to warrant the expense.

On the graphics side of monitor use, there is never enough screen space. Even when you can zoom down to a small area of graphic design, you still may need to view something just to your left or right. But that points out an issue: you may also need to view something just above or below. So you win one and don't gain on the other.

This wide screen is also not the standard for photos. TV's are adopting this wide screen because that's how movies are being filmed. But this ratio 16x9, has not followed over into cameras and photos. The ratio found in 35mm cameras — 3 to 1 — doesn't properly fill the old standard 8 x10-inch photo paper. 6 x 4-inch paper does fit that camera format exactly.

In writing this, I stopped and decided to check my Nikon digital camera and discovered that its native ratio is 6 x 4½-inch. But guess what, that's also 8½ x 11 ratio. Isn't that interesting?

These sizes are all somewhat problematical since

most of us edit/crop our photos whichever way we want to. We do this regardless of the size or ratio of our monitors or the paper they will be printed on. No matter how we decide to edit a photo, some photos are going to fit some monitors some of the time, but not all monitors all the time.

By the way, these ratios are important when you go to take your photos to Walgreen's or some other store with Kodak photo printing kiosk. I highly recommend these for high quality photos, but obviously the photos pretty much need to fill the standard sizes of paper or combinations they offer. A quick view of photo formats on the Internet indicates that you can get the old photo paper sizes, plus some of the newer sizes.

My final point on this, is that before buying one of these extra wide monitors, or any size monitor, consider how you are really going to use it. This is especially true considering the still high costs of larger LCD monitors.

Internet shopping experience — Here I sit, three quarters of the way through January and I'm looking for a sweater online. It has been a real education to try to shop for clothing online. I've found that many Internet retailer's really don't know how people want to shop.

For example, many sites force you to tell them what you want. You know, as in type in what you want! I won't use these sites. If they can't give me a list to pick from, then they don't want my business. And when I specify men's clothing, and in particular sweaters, I don't want to see a page that starts out with pictures of women's winter coats. I don't feel I should be forced to scroll down a page only to find yet another button where I must decide where to go next.

I checked out some of the top clothing companies and it's surprising that some of the best don't have well designed sites. Some of the top brands weren't even available — "down for maintenance" which is a euphemism for "we don't have a clue yet." One of those was Old Navy: "...currently closed for a scheduled upgrade. These improvements shouldn't

(Claude Continued on page 8)

To Upgrade Or Not To Upgrade

By Timothy Everingham, NOCCC, teveringham@acm.org

To upgrade or not to upgrade, that is the question. Whether it is nobler to upgrade the computer you have or to put aside the invested fortune of your current computer and get a new one? Or yet do you even need to be putting your cash into computer hardware? Luckily, Shakespeare didn't have to deal with these questions, which in recent years have become even more complicated to answer.

Where you should start is by determining what your present and future needs and wants are going to be. Don't try to project over five years. I am not talking about what hardware you may drool over, but what you will want or need to do with your computer. Will it be word processing; web surfing; email; burning CD and DVDs; database or list management; software development; photo, graphics, video editing and creation; or something else? Then you look at the application software that will accomplish those tasks. Also look at how long will your current application software and operating system(s) be supported by the manufacturer (Windows 98 will no longer have support & patches available after December 31, 2003). Also if you have software that is known to be troublesome, like Windows ME; the need or desire to upgrade it should be considered. Then you look at the system requirements to run these applications: hardware, operating system, and other supporting software (software that is required to be installed on your system in order for your application to run). Remember that the companies want to sell you the software or hardware, resulting in the minimum software requirements listed being as low as possible and may not reflect real world conditions. If you have a system that is exactly listed as the minimum system requirements (it is the minimum system requirements if only one is listed) consider that this product will run extremely slowly and crash at times. Some manufactures list both minimum and recommended system requirement, and you do not want to be too far below the recommended requirements. Also some system requirements listed do not change the RAM requirements for different operating systems. They list as minimum RAM the one for the oldest operating system. A program may run on Windows 95, 98, 98 SE, ME, 2000, and XP; but the amount of RAM needed in reality is more for Windows 98, 98 SE, and ME than Windows 95 and more for Windows 2000 and XP than Windows 98, 98 SE,

and ME.

There are some general guidelines. If you have a Pentium II computer, AMD equivalent or older and are doing anything else than word processing, simple web surfing and email you are looking at having too many things needed to upgrade for it to be worthwhile. With Macintosh or notebook computers upgrade options are more limited than desktop PCs, so unless it is fairly new you should more be looking at getting a new computer. Also you have to look at how many of your computers components are close to or past their expected lifetimes.

If your computers components are five years or older, your computer is living on borrowed time. Where the upgrade option looks better is with Pentium 3, Pentium 4 or Athlon based desktop computers. However, software activation has made this more complicated. With activation the software takes a snapshot of your computers hardware configuration and if you try to run it after doing too many upgrades after activation the software decides that is its not the same computer it was originally; but a different one, violating the software license and shuts itself down. You then have to go to the software manufacturer and try to convince them that the computer you upgraded is not a new computer. The most famous of the programs that includes this feature is Windows XP, but there are a growing number of application software packages that have this feature too. Of course this has bred a lot of fear uncertainty and doubt (FUD) about upgrading computers, which the people who sell new computers are happy to take advantage of. If you do a combination motherboard (main circuit board) and processor replacement activation should be a problem for you. If your current computer fits your systems requirements of your expected needs and wants, congratulations you are done without having to spend any money. However, if you still are considering upgrading, the next thing you want to do is get out your motherboard manual (may be contained in computer manual). It will tell you what components can be installed on it. If you can't find your manual, there is likely to be a PDF of it up on the manufacturer's website. While you are there check to see if there are any BIOS updates available that may give the motherboard new features that you may need. If the motherboard does not sup-

(Continued on page 8)

(Delphia—Continued from page 6)

take long, so keep checking back." Maybe they really are going to upgrade the website, but I found too many of these for it to be a coincidence. By the way, I finally found Old Navy using a different approach. Sometimes Google or other redirectors, can lead you astray.

And then you would go to a site of a major clothing company and they would show you two (2) sweaters. Spiegel is one of those. Well you know these companies don't just offer two men's sweaters. My guess is that they are offering only what they think people might order online. While that is nice, I'm tired of seeing the same \$200 navy sweater that everyone else also offers. I'm online, because I want to see what these stores really have to offer. If they have what I like, I'll work it out so I can go to there

(Computer upgrading—Continued from page 7)

port the processor; type, speed or amount of RAM; or the type of plug-in card (AGP, PCI, EISA, ISA) you want to install, you will have to install a new motherboard that will. For drive (IDE, ATA, SATA, SCSI), IEEE 1394(Firewire), and USB interfaces you can get plug-in cards instead of getting a new motherboard. Upgrading your RAM is probably the thing that can be most effective in putting off the need to buy a new computer. The others would be a new video card and a new hard drive. Installing a CD or DVD R/RW drive is also a good option in order to backup things on you hard drives and being able to take data and media files off your drives that you use infrequently. Don't forget to calculate your power requirements and have the case be able to fit the motherboard. After that, make up a list of your proposed upgrade parts, and total the cost of them. Then compare this cost to the cost of a similar system to what your upgraded system would be. If you are doing a lot of upgrading you will find that the totally new computer will be close to or cost less than the cost of upgrading (there is a discount for buying an entirely new computer rather than just the parts of one). If you find yourself in this position you should lean toward buying a new computer. With this type of consideration you should also be looking at how you would transfer data and applications from your old computer to your new one (remember software activation issues).

With AMD releasing their Athlon 64 bit desktop processors, one of the issues in upgrading or buy a new computer is will I need a 64 bit processor. For most people the answer is not until the latter part of **February 2004**

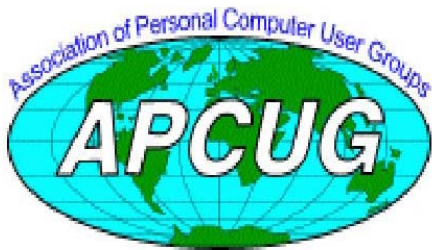
store. But at least give me a choice.

More at Spiegel. I finally decided to type in a search word — "sweaters." Well I was offered 19 pages of sweaters and I would have to look at each page one at a time. As far as I could tell, they were all women's sweaters and I was left with no way of knowing how to find men's sweaters. In the end, I couldn't find any way out of the search criteria, and so exited their site with a very disgruntled feeling.

By the way, you can always tell that these sites are designed by 20 year olds with perfect vision, especially when you see small type in GRAY. Macy's site had this problem. Gottschalk's site is not good for other reasons, one of which is a popup. Surely all the survey's of potential customers indicates that no one likes popups!

this decade. First to get the most out of a 64 bit processor you need 64 bit applications running on top of a 64 bit operating system. Of course if you have a Mac G5 system running Panther (Mac OS 10.3) and some of the recent versions of the high level Apple content creation applications you are already there, but for the PC world, the only 64 bit applications programs now are very high level server based or scientific applications. There is 64 bit Linux, but the Windows XP version is still in beta and won't be out until spring 2004. There will be 64 bit versions of some games in 2004, but do not look until 2005 for a significant amount of 64 bit software for Windows XP. Because there will be a lot of 32 bit computers around for a while there should be plenty of 32 bit software. The 64 bit Athlons' and what rumors say Intel is developing as a 64 bit desktop processor will be able to run 32 bit applications well, which should also keep the 32 bit software market healthy for quite a while. So unless you are a high level gamer, run high-level scientific or content creation applications, or run Macs you should wait on getting a 64 bit processor computer. Making the decision on whether to upgrade your current computer or buy a new computer have become more complex than it was a few years ago. A systematic step by step approach is appropriate. First determine your needs, then what will support filling those needs, and then weigh the costs of upgrading or buying new. May the wisdom of the Great Elizabethan Bard be upon you, resulting in a fruitful bounty of computer buying.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is a member of North Orange County Computer Club. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>



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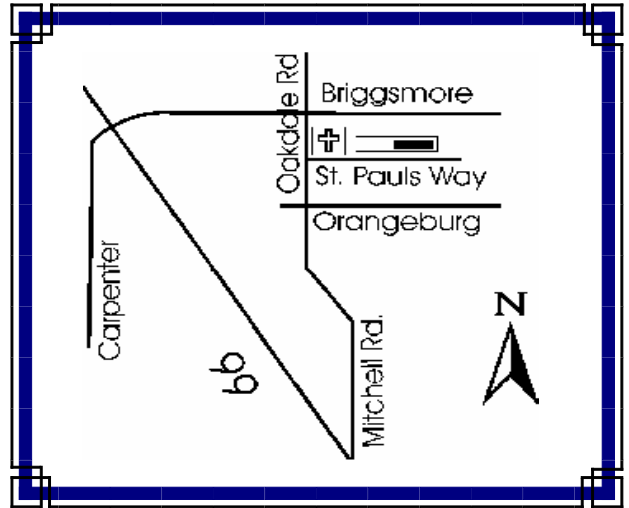
Modesto and Valley
ARTS AND HOME.com
News, Features and Sources

Claude Delphia, publisher, 209-537-9604

Reasonable Website setup and design
209-537-9604

The Club's Meeting Place

Our General Meetings and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held in the gym behind St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1528 Oakdale Road, Modesto (between Briggsmore and Orangeburg, north of Century Center). The church faces Oakdale Road and the gym faces St. Paul's Way.



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Need help hooking up
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Special Interest Groups

SIG meetings are held at the discretion of the leader and participants. Sometimes the date, location and time have to be changed or a meeting cancelled. Give the leader a call before the meeting if it is your first time. Call Bud Bondiotti if you know of changes — phone 667-1980 or email sig@mpcug.net.

SIG Name	Leaders	Phone#	Date / Time / Note
Beginners' SIG..	Bud Bondiotti	667-1980.....	6:30 p.m., 2nd Mon., Denny's 1525 McHenry Ave., Modesto
Q&A.....			6:30 p.m. before general meeting
Genealogy SIG..	C. Delphia	537-9604.....	On hiatus
Board Meeting...	Sid Loshner	545-0853.....	6:30 p.m., 1st Tues. of each month. Call for place.
Website SIG	Jim Goodman	579-0122.....	Looking for a place to meet.
Women's' SIG....	Liz Leedom.....	523-4218....	Contact for meeting location and time

Membership renewal: As with all organizations, MPCUG is run solely by volunteers. That means that when your membership comes due, someone must send you a reminder, sometimes several times. We try to cut back that need by printing your expiration date and a message on your mailing label letting you know your membership status. Please help by renewing your membership in a timely manor. It saves user group money and volunteer time.

Please check your label for expiration date and message



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