

## You can build a new computer

Have you ever wondered what makes a computer tick? Have you ever envied those around you who proudly boast of building their own computer? You too can join the ranks of those who understand how a computer works because you will put it together yourself. The MPCUG in conjunction with the Intel Corporation and the PC Club store in Modesto will show you the ins and outs of putting together a personal computer from design to build. The program will consist of two meetings, the first at our regular general meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> where Bud Bondiotti will present a PowerPoint presentation from Intel on choosing the correct parts for that special computer and what to look for. Discussion on CPU speed, memory, hard drives and other essentials will be presented to help you determine what you want to have on hand to build your own computer. After the presentation, questions will be fielded by Bondiotti and other knowledgeable persons and details of how you can order the parts that you will need for the build will be gone over. If you wish to continue on to part 2, the build, directions to the PC Club webpage will be given where special pricing for certain computers will be available for purchase. After all the orders have been collected, PC Club will notify the group and arrangements will be made to pick up the computers prior to the build. A build site has yet to be determined at press time.

**For directions to the meeting  
location see page 10.**

**Next Meeting  
Thursday, November 17,  
7:30 p.m.  
Random Access SIG  
6:30 p.m.**

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**Next board meeting**  
Come have dinner with the board,  
7 p.m. Wednesday, December 7th,  
Ridgeway's, Modesto.



## President's Corner .... Mike Kumler

I don't have too much this month. I am looking forward to our computer building programs coming up. I am also very pleased to see our Digital Photo SIG coming back to life. I am certain it will have every success.

We will be in need of programs soon, so keep your ears open and pass along any suggestions to Liz.

That's about it from me. Happy computing

## Membership Report .... Hank Mudge

### New members - Welcome to the club:

Dan Fio

### Renewals - Thank you for your continued support:

None

### Members Dues Expiring in November:

Johnny Jones

Nancy Hanline

Robert Richart

Wendol Torrison

John A Schmidt

Keith Schock

### Members Dues Expiring in Dec

Mike Mensinger

Bill & Flora Goodridge

Betty Hinkley

Bill & Virginia Nylander

## Treasurer's Report .... Barb Cameron

<u>Income</u>	Modesto PC User Group Financial Statement September, 2005	<u>Expenses</u>
Membership	\$ 72.00	No Expenses for September
Interest on Savings	\$ 0.03	
Donations	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	

### Current Assets

Checking - US Bank, Modesto	\$ 1,801.91
Savings, US Bank, Modesto	<u>\$ 332.12</u>
	\$ 2,134.03
Fixed Assets	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Total Club Assets	\$ 2,134.03

Be sure and check our web site for last minute information [www.mpcug.net](http://www.mpcug.net)

# Club Notes . . . . Club members, Officers

## Meeting Location Help

By Jim Goodman

We need volunteers to assist with the following chores prior to and after each meeting. By performing these tasks, we meet the church's criteria for keeping our meeting costs down:

Prior to the meeting:

Set up projector screen. Move chairs to back of room. Move tables.

After the meeting:

Put away projector screen. Return chairs. Move tables back. Clean up room. Take trash out and replace plastic bags

If you can assist with these tasks, please show up early and be willing to stay late.

## SIG Meeting Dates

**Digital Photo SIG** - Stay tuned for new time and date

**Beginners' SIG** - Denny's 1525 McHenry Ave, Modesto ..... Second Monday of the month

**Random Access Q & A** - Destiny Christian Center, Modesto ..... Fourth Thursday of the month prior to general meeting

## Helpful hints when purchasing a new computer

By Bud Bondiotti, editor, MPCUG P C Post

With the upcoming presentation of Intel's "Build it yourself" we often times forget to "do the homework" by failing to assess what our needs for a computer are and what we'd like to have. Having bought a number of computers I try to use these guidelines when making my choice.

The first three considerations of purchasing a new computer should be:

- Amount of money available for a new system.

A computer can be purchased for as little as a few hundred dollars and as much as \$ 5,000.00 (which should do most everything except walk the dog and make dinner). As computers become more sophisticated they will be able to do more. Plan on a system that can be upgraded as newer concepts come out. (A thought for the future is the 64 bit operating system that Microsoft is currently working on. Checking that bus speeds that will handle this should be seriously considered).

- What kind of computing will you be doing.

Are you planning on doing some serious gaming with this new computer? How about handling graphics (Digital cameras, creating web pages, newsletters or just lots of pictures). Do you have a large music collection on tapes or records that you would like to convert to digital music? Both processor speed and storage should be prime considerations now.

- What may your needs be in the next 6 months to a year.

(Continued on page 9)

**Looking for a housemate:** \$400/month, utilities included; north central Modesto; large front room; all household privileges; satellite television (HBO/Showtime) [eleedom@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eleedom@sbcglobal.net) .

# Claude's Bytes

By Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus, Modesto PC User Group — [EdEmer@mpcug.net](mailto:EdEmer@mpcug.net)

## Diskettes and security • Old hardware problems •

**Diskettes like rabbits** — Every old computer box I look into has diskettes, some from 15 years ago or more. I've also got all the 5¼ disks I ever bought with a few exceptions. Of course I have no where to use them and doubt there's much on them that's recoverable.

What got me into this was going through a bunch of storage boxes and seeing all these diskettes, hundreds of them. And then as it happens, at the same time I have two friends who need some floppies and it just seems dumb for them to have to buy them when I have so many I don't need anymore. I just need to save what's on them and then clean them up. Of course it's not that simple.

Clean them up? What do I mean by that? Well this is where the security issue comes in. It is quite possible that those old disks have very personal financial information on those old disks. In fact I'd be very surprised if they didn't have that some on there.

So now the issue becomes: I have to wipe those old disks clean of data and make them almost impossible to read by anyone else before I can pass them along.

So first I need to copy the old files to a place that I might want to look at them again. And then I need to make sure the old data can't be read. The best way to do the latter is to format the diskettes. This makes it difficult to read these old diskettes except by special recovery software which very few people have.

Now I need to learn exactly what process to use on the most sensitive disks. Actually considering the low dollar value of these disks, I should probably just crunch or otherwise destroy the old floppies rather than spend the time "cleaning" them up. But there's that part of me which hates to throw away something perfectly usable. But can I really afford the time to clean these old disks?

It's also important to keep in mind that as new computers come down in price, they are coming without floppy drives. So less people are going to want these old diskettes let alone be able to use them.

**Old hardware** — As I've written here many times, I have a lot of my old hardware including my original PC, one of the first, if not the first in Stanislaus County. What to do with this old stuff is becoming more of a problem. I'm tired of shoving it around.

But I have a bigger issue: what to do with some of the older storage media. As I wrote above, the old diskettes are becoming something of a burden.

But worse than them are Iomega Zip disks. These disks hold at least 100 megs of data and were wonderful before CD's came out. They were just a little thicker than 3½ flopps and required a special drive. Some people are still using them. One disadvantage was that they required a special drive. And they were expensive — over \$10 each.

So now the question is, what do I do with those disks? I could spend a lot of time and find a Zip drive to read them in, but again it becomes an issue of whether it is worth the time. If I come up with an answer, I'll let you know. In the meantime they aren't going anywhere fast.

I also have an old computer sitting here with a tape back up system. I haven't seen any of those backup tapes and on top of that, as I remember it, proprietary software was required to read or extract that data. If I run across those, I think I will definitely destroy/trash them.

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  - Advanced Intel GMA950 graphics (DirectX 9, 3D accelerator),
  - Intel High Definition (HD) Audio, PCI Express, Intel 10/100 Ethernet, Hi-Speed USB 2.0, 1394, and Intel SATA and RAID support.
- Your choice of 512MB, 1GB, 2GB, or 4GB of fast DDR2 Memory (533 or 667).
- Your choice of Serial ATA (SATA) hard drive(s):
  - 50GB, 160GB, or 320GB Western Digital 7200RPM, 8MB cache
  - 73.4GB 10,000RPM Seagate drive
  - When you order two identical drives, you can optionally configure them in a standard RAID array for a single-volume, high-performance disk drive
- Your choice of 1 or 2 CD/DVD drives from the following:
  - 52x32x52 CD-RW drive
  - 52x32x52 DVD/CD-RW Combo drive
  - 16X DVD-ROM drive
  - 16X double-layer DVD+/-RW drive
  - 16X double-layer HP LightScribe DVD+/-RW drive, for laser-labeling without a printer
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- Your choice of a 300W or 450W Power Supply w/24-pin motherboard connector
- Windows XP Home, Windows XP Professional, or Unispire (Linux) Operating Systems



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- 512MB Kingston ValueRAM Memory DDR2 533
- Cooler Master Centurion 5 Case- Black w/Silver Trim- 300W PS
- Western Digital 80GB Hard Drive - 7200RPM 8MB Cache, SATA
- On-board Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950
- On-board Intel® High Definition 8 Channel Audio, SigmaTel STAC9223
- On-board 10/100 Ethernet Adapter
- Logitech Deluxe Desktop Optical
- Liteon 16X DVD ROM Drive
- Microsoft Windows XP Home

Configure Now Starting at

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- Cooler Master Centurion 5 Case- Black w/Silver Trim- 300W PS
- 2x Western Digital 160GB Hard Drive - 7200RPM 8MB Cache, SATA
- On-board Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950
- On-board Intel® High Definition 8 Channel Audio, SigmaTel STAC9223
- On-board 10/100 Ethernet Adapter
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- 2x Western Digital 320GB Hard Drive - 7200RPM 8MB Cache, SATA
- On-board Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950
- On-board Intel® High Definition 8 Channel Audio, SigmaTel STAC9223
- On-board 10/100Gigabit Ethernet Adapter
- Logitech NinoVA Media Desktop
- HP 16X DVD+/- Double Layer LightScribe Drive and Liteon 16X DVD ROM Drive
- Microsoft Windows XP Pro

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# Microsoft is Helping ...

By Bob Elgines, Colorado Computer Club of Lake Havasu, AZ [elginesz@rraz.net](mailto:elginesz@rraz.net)

You may have noticed in your Windows XP/2000 updates that you have updated the MS Malicious Software Tool (MSRT). Don't bother to look for it on your computer, you won't find it. You will only see a window if you have or had a problem.

What is malicious software? Malicious software (also called "malware") is software that was developed with the intention to cause harm. Malware can include viruses, worms, spyware, and other destructive programs that can hide on your computer and can slow its performance to a crawl. Even more alarming, malware can be used to monitor your browsing habits, steal passwords, and even allow an attacker to gain control of your system. Malicious software either installs on your computer without your knowledge or can be installed with a program you intended to download.

The MSRT checks for and helps to remove specific, prevalent malicious software infections. If detection and removal has accrued, a display window indicates which malicious software was picked up.

Each month, after the second Tuesday, Microsoft will provide an updated version of this tool that removes malicious software that is found to be prevalent for that month.

Getting the Malicious Software Removal Tool - There are two ways you can get the Malicious Software Removal Tool. Microsoft recommends that home users either turn on the Automatic Updates feature in Windows XP, or run the tool online.

1. If your computer is running Windows XP, you can get the latest version of the tool online from Microsoft Update. To have the tool automatically delivered and installed each month on your computer without having to take further action, simply turn on Automatic Updates.
2. If your computer is running either Windows XP, or Windows 2000, you can run the tool directly from an easy-to-use online wizard available at:  
[www.microsoft.com/malwareremove](http://www.microsoft.com/malwareremove)

How do I verify whether the removal tool has run on a client computer? There are two ways to check:

1. You can examine the value data for following registry entry to verify the execution of the tool. You can implement such a check as part of a startup script or a logon script. This will prevent the tool from running multiple times.

Subkey: HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\RemovalTools\MRT

Every time the tool is run, independent of the results of the execution, the tool will record a GUID to the registry to indicate that it has been executed. The following table lists the GUID that corresponds to each release.

2. Using Windows Explorer look for the log entitled "mrt.log" located under your "Document" files or in the following folder: C:\Windows\Debug\mrt.log  
Another similar tool is written by McAfee called Stinger. It is updated approximately every three months and can be downloaded at: <http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/>.

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# Netiquette Equals Friendly Online Neighborhoods

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology Website,  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Etiquette -- proper behavior in various situations -- has concerned humans through the ages. Google [[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)] turns up references to early telephone manners, proper Medieval-era knightly behavior, and how shells and sharp stones became today's knives and forks (and, of course, which hand to hold them in).

Though the Internet became generally accessible about ten years ago, academics and researchers had used it for decades before that. Just as civilization accommodated sudden widespread automobile and telephone usage, developing common practices (stop for red lights, answer telephones with "Hello"), new online technologies created the need for corresponding innovations in manners.

Called Netiquette ('Net + etiquette), the new discipline really just requires using old manners in a new setting. But since going online is like traveling to another country, a guidebook is useful.

The first and simplest chapter is simply "Follow the golden rule" [[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethic\\_of\\_Reciprocity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethic_of_Reciprocity)]: Treat people online with the same courtesy you expect. Without normal conversational cues such as body language, facial expression, and tone of voice, it's easy to misunderstand someone's meaning. You may remember Emily Litella on classic Saturday Night Live television, mishearing the need to reduce TV violence as "eliminating violins". Even stranger miscommunication occurs online, so give others the benefit of the doubt.

Out-of-control ranting is sometimes called "flaming". Before responding angrily, consider how you'd react to receiving the note you're about to send. Remember that once sent, e-mail and other online communications take on a life of their own, being forever retrievable with your name attached. And asking "Did you mean..." can avoid having to give Emily Litella's trademark "Never mind" if your interpretation was off target. Replying calmly often gets a conversation back on track without anyone suffering a "flame war", an unproductive exchange of angry notes.

E-mail is likely the most commonly addressed Netiquette area. Searching Google for email + netiquette provides an encyclopedia of advice, some general, some for personal use, and much for business settings. Common tips are DON'T USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS (it's hard to read and is considered "shouting"); be brief; use meaningful subject lines; quote just enough from what you're answering to provide useful context; don't forward to everyone you know jokes, rumors, hoaxes, chain letters, charity appeals, and such, even if an arriving note tells you to do so; don't send "Me too" notes to discussion lists; don't send attachments without getting the recipient's permission; send plain text e-mail unless all your addressees prefer HTML-format; etc.

Accept and cheerfully answer questions asked by people newly online -- remember that we all started with basics. Interesting e-mail tips are available at places like Writers Write [[www.writerswrite.com/journal/dec99/pirillo1.htm](http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/dec99/pirillo1.htm)], Emailreplies.com [[www.emailreplies.com/](http://www.emailreplies.com/)], and Yale University Library [[www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/](http://www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/)].

Not all tips are "Don't"!

If you receive multiple replies to a question you ask online, it's advisable -- this will make people love you -- to summarize answers for everyone else who saw the question. Be careful with humor: what's obvious and sidesplitting to you may baffle or annoy someone else. When appropriate, and sparingly, use "smileys" -- symbols like ;-) -- to show that you're not serious. And if you receive what seems to be an unlikely rumor, do the

*(Continued on page 9)*

# Laptop Display Replacement . . . .

by Mike Borman SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

I have owned three different Toshiba laptop computers and was always impressed with how rugged they were. A couple of them have been used to collect CCD images from my telescope on cold and dewy nights without a problem. We have also used Toshiba laptops where I work to program and monitor Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) in industrial plants all across the tristate area without a problem. One even had water pouring down on it accidentally at one plant, and after letting it dry out a bit, was as good as new. So this past February when I decided I needed a new laptop, I once again chose a Toshiba, a Satellite A75. This one had a very nice 15.4" Trubrite TFT display.

Last month however, I discovered that my newest Toshiba laptop would not pass the drop test. I had been using it in the living room while watching TV, and had it resting on one of the arms of my recliner (which is wide enough to support the bottom of the laptop). Unfortunately, when I got up to get something out of the kitchen, the laptop slid off the arm of the recliner and fell a little over two feet to the carpeted floor. When I picked it up I noticed that the display had a crack in the upper right hand corner. I won't repeat the words I uttered!

I decided to take the computer back to Circuit City where I bought it, to see what my options were for fixing it. They told me that accidental breakage was not covered by the City Advantage plan they had sold me in February, and it was not covered by the Toshiba warranty either. Circuit City proposed sending it off to their Service Center in Louisville to see how much it would cost to replace the display. Unfortunately, they came back with an estimate of over \$1000 to fix it. A call to Toshiba informed me that replacing the screen would cost \$700 plus labor and shipping. Considering that I paid \$1400 for it new, either choice seemed a bit outrageous. I also found that it was not covered by my homeowner's insurance or personal articles policy.

I next decided to see if I could possibly replace the display myself. After searching on the Internet, I found a website called IDParts.com that had parts for most of the major brands of laptops. I gave them a call and asked them how much a replacement LCD display would cost for my Toshiba laptop. They said \$335. Since that was a lot better than paying Circuit City \$1000 or buying a new laptop, I went ahead and ordered one. It arrived in less than a week. Unfortunately when I opened the package I found a display more badly broken than the one I wanted to replace! More unmentionable words were uttered.

I called IDParts, and they agreed to take back the broken display and send me a new one. The second display arrived intact a couple days later.

My next task was to remove the existing LCD display. The IDParts website shows an example of a "typical" display replacement. It shows removing the little rubber pads that run around the perimeter of the display to reveal screws that hold the display together. When I removed the rubber pads from my display however, there were only screws under the two at the bottom of the display. With some careful probing with a screwdriver I found that the top of the display just snapped together. After getting off the bezel I found that the display LCD was attached to a metal frame with several tiny Philips head screws. Before removing the screws, I had to detach (very carefully) a ribbon cable and a power cable. Then, doing all the steps above in reverse, I installed the new LCD display. My main worry was with reattaching the ribbon cable. It was difficult to line up the two halves of the connector and feel whether it was properly connected. The ribbon cable was just barely long enough to reach the connector on the new LCD. Fortunately I did it right and the new display works fine again!

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*(Continued from page 7)*

sender a favor by checking it out at a site like snopes.com [[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)] and reporting what you find.

The Netiquette Home Page [[www.albion.com/netiquette/](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/)] is an entertaining and informative reference. It notes that Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and informal cyberspace "rules of the road". The site lists and explains rules with friendly illustrations. It's interesting that not only do the rules all agree with that Golden Rule mentioned earlier, they're often different ways of giving the same advice. For example, using the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life is an easy way to make yourself look good online.

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Mike Borman is an engineer with Three I Engineering, Inc. in Evansville. He is an advisor and past president of the Evansville Astronomical Society and has won national awards for astrophotography and model rocket building. His Web site is at <http://members.sigecom.net/mborman/>

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Is there a home media entertainment system on your horizon? Are you hinting for a new digital video camera for Christmas? Are you planning to learn how to burn your own CD's and DVD's? Will other members of the family be using this computer whose needs are greater than yours?

After determining these items, now it's time to think about your new system. The three primary considerations are:

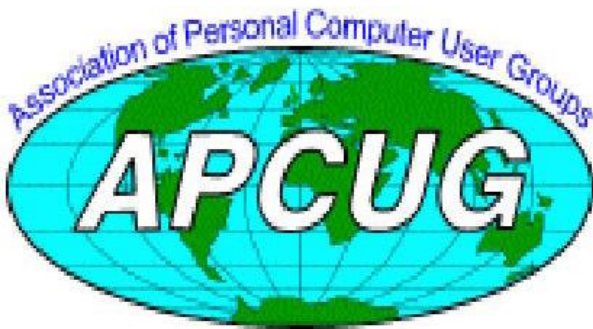
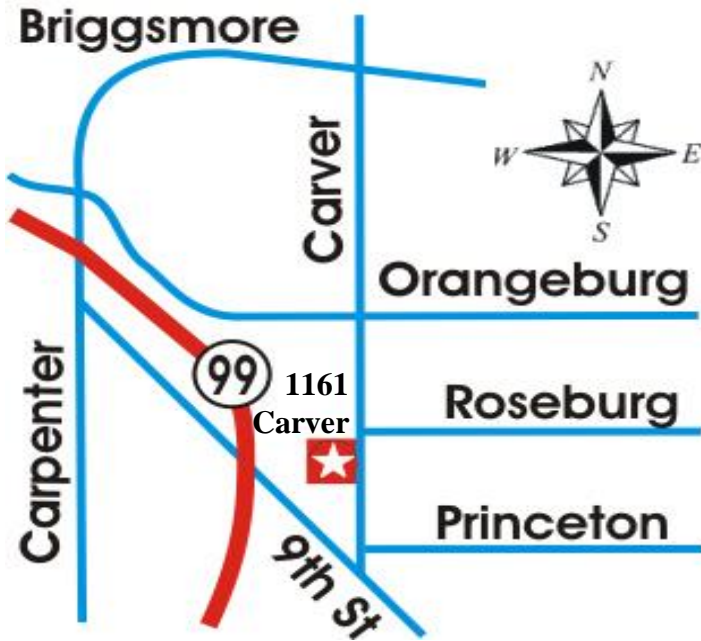
- Processor speed - How fast the computer processes information is as important as how much storage space you have. The Intel dual core processors work faster with less heat.
- Ram - Internal RAM (Random Access Memory) eases the hard drive access by Windows. The rule of thumb here is get as much RAM as you can afford even if you have to sacrifice the installation of a larger hard drive.
- Hard drives - Here again, get as much as you can afford. The cost of add-on external hard-drives are less expensive than they used to be so if need be they can be added later on.

If you have the opportunity, check with the guys at PC Club or some other knowledgeable person to see if your heading in the right direction. And finally, the Intel presentation will help provide you with numerous tips in selecting the computer that is just right for you at the right price.

See you at the part 1 presentation.

# The Club's Meeting Place

Our general meeting and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held in the Destiny Christian Center, 1161 Carver Road, Modesto, on the west side of Carver Road, right across from Sam's Food City.



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Elizabeth Leedom

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[jgood99@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgood99@sbcglobal.net)

Modesto, Ceres Area

Be sure and check our web site at least once a week at [www.mpcug.net](http://www.mpcug.net)

# **Modesto PC User Group Officers**

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## PC Post

**Editor: Bud Bondiotti**

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Bud Bondiotti and Elizabeth Leedom, Presidents Emeritus

## Join The Modesto PC User Group

**Web site: [www.mpcug.net](http://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-

## The PC Post and Editorial Policy

The PC Post is published online 12 times per year and is available 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 (209) 667-1980 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 reprinting, 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, Minolta laser color printer and a lot of sweat and a few tears.

# Special Interest Groups

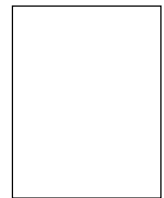
SIG meetings are held at the discretion of the leader and participants. Sometimes the date, location and time have to be changed or a meeting cancelled. Give the leader a call before the meeting if it is your first time.

SIG Name	Leaders	Phone#	Date / Time / Note
Beginners' SIG .....	Bud Bondietti .....	667-1980 .....	6:30 p.m., 2nd Monday, Denny's 1525 McHenry Ave.
Board Meeting .....	Mike Kumler .....	531-2262 .....	7 p.m., 1st Wed. of the month.
Digital Photography.....	J. Goodman .....	579-0122 .....	Time, location to be announced
Random Access Q&A .....			6:30 p.m. before general meeting

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 e-mailing you that your membership is expiring. Please help by renewing your membership in a timely manor. It saves user group money and



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Be sure and check our web site at least once a week: [www.mpcug.net](http://www.mpcug.net)