



New Microsoft program is July meeting topic

LiveOne Care for Microsoft Windows is the subject of the Thursday, July 27th, meeting of the Modesto PC User Group.

This all-in-one protection and maintenance service for Windows XP provides antivirus and anti spyware protection, as well as a firewall, performance tune-ups, data backup and restoration – for a cost of \$49.95 per year, which covers as many as three computers.

Former vice president and PC Post editor Bud Bondiotti will do the presentation, which will include information on a beta version of Windows Defender, an anti popup program.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the Random Access Special Interest Group, where members can get their most pressing computer questions answered. After refreshments at 7:30 p.m., Bondiotti will offer his program.

The meeting, as usual, will take place at Destiny Christian Center on Carver Road just south of Roseburg Avenue. Members and friends should park on the south side of the building.

For directions to the meeting location see page 10.

**Next Meeting
Thursday, July 27,
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, Aug. 2,
Ridgeway's restaurant, Modesto.

Be sure and check our web site for last minute information www.mpcug.net



Presidents Report Mike Kumler

Mike was unavailable for his monthly report this month. He will return next month.

SIG Meeting Dates

- Digital Photo SIG** - Denny's 1525 McHenry Ave, Modesto Second Saturday of the month
- 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

Membership Report Hank Mudge

Members renewing - Thank you for your support:

Pete Ball 5/7 Gene Richards 6/7

Members dues expiring in May:

Lester Maxfield Vincent Kerrigan

Members dues expiring in June:

Dick Currie Jerry Pack Alfred Kaufman

Members dues expiring in July:

Robert Barbara Meyer Pat Bradbury Allan Romander
Nick & Lorna Crooker Richard Hitchcock Paul Martelli

Members dues expiring in August:

Donald Thill Joyce Frost Dorothy & Roy Schmidt

Members dues expiring in September:

Elizabeth Adkinson

Minutes of the MPCUG General Meeting

Thursday, June 22, 2006

6:30 Special Interest Group Meeting (Q & A)--Bud Bondietti (presiding)

Power surge wiped out the internal modem on the computer--but the computer still works. Bought an external modem. Get current or latest drivers for the new modem.

Microsoft still supporting Windows 98 or Me? Will totally end on July 1.

Update Windows 98 or Me to XP? May or may not work.

What does RSS mean that shows up on the computer? Will find out and put in the PC Post or use for a later program!!

Question on VISTA? Out in beta format for those computers that can use it--usually the computer has a dual core processor that is 64 bit.

More and more cameras are

Question on ClearWire! Can't put email in folders. Using Clearwire's mail program. Work-a-round would be to use Outlook Express or some other eMail program.

Visited Clearwire's website--they show up on your doorstep--to sell their product. Perhaps a little overbearing.

WiFi detectors can be used to find wireless sites they can use that are not protected. WEP (Wireless Encryption Protocol).

Installation of Norton Anti-Virus--can be very difficult!

Break--Great Refreshments—Great homemade cookies!

Business Matters

Elections Committee set up. Elections took place.

The following members were elected for another term:

Mike Kumler--President

Elizabeth Leedom--Vice President

Director at Large--Hank Mudge

7:30 Presenter—"Bridges to Technology" Presentation

The presenter is looking for volunteers for the class to teach the basic classes in computer technology. It is very basic--because the individuals who want to learn are mostly totally clueless.

Volunteers have to go through the United Way Program--which can be rather bureaucratic.

Submitted by Terry Fix, Secretary

Claude's Bytes

By Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus, Modesto PC User Group

Viruses still a plague • Leading Special Interest Groups

Viruses — Vigilance is the name of the game when it comes to protecting your computer from a virus. A friend had a scare in the last two weeks. She received an email from me with a message asking her to open the attachment. Since we didn't have any plans for me to send her something, and I don't normally send her a file unless we've agreed on it in advance, she emailed me and asked me what it was about.

As it turned out, I hadn't sent her anything and after checking her computer, it became clear fast that someone had sent her a virus using my name as the sender. I think I wrote about this before, maybe last year. If you have the technical knowledge of how to do it, it is easy to pretend to be someone else and trick someone into opening a malicious virus.

As it happened, the virus my friend was sent was a virus that would have used her email list to send out and replicate itself on her friend's computers.

This is where an anti virus program becomes a must. And you have to keep them up-to-date. If you don't know how to do that, you probably need to go to Bud Bondietti's beginners SIG and get a lesson in anti virus software.

Personally I've been using Norton Anti Virus for quite a few years now and it has never failed me that I can recall. I pay a yearly fee, and the program goes out and checks for the latest virus definitions regularly.

Basically, an anti virus program can't identify a virus unless it can match it to a master list or library of viruses. Norton/Symantec updates these libraries very often, perhaps two or more times a week. By subscribing to their service, you are allowed to get the latest copy of the definitions as they become available.

Actually you don't really need to understand any of what I just wrote, but you do need to know that you must subscribe to the service, and your anti virus program must automatically be set to update itself. If you don't subscribe and have it set on auto update, you are putting your computer, and even your friend's computers, in danger of becoming infected.

I can sit here at my computer and as emails come in, I can see them being checked for viruses.

Leading a SIG — Recently Jim Goodman had to step aside as the Digital Photo SIG leader for the summer due to health issues. We've all been there and we know where the priorities have to be.

However there was a large demand from members that the SIG continue, so the Board of Directors has made a special effort to try to find leadership alternatives and held a special meeting to see what the possibilities were.

In the earliest days of MPCUG, we started having SIGs and I was the second person to offer to lead one as I recall. That would have been in 1983 when the IBM-PC was still in its infancy. I lead a Lotus 1-2-3 SIG. At the time, it was the only spreadsheet that would work on the PC. That made it simple from the standpoint of those attending the SIG being on the same level.

Over the years, I hosted a number of SIG's and learned some of the limits of the concept.

(Claude Continued on page 8)

Managing Device Drivers

By Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida

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Windows is the most widely used operating system (OS) in the personal computer world.

For each piece of hardware that's connected to a Windows based computer, somebody somewhere has written a piece of software to make the device work with a computer. This piece of software is called a "Device Driver." One of the most useful features of a well-written device driver is making itself all but invisible to whoever is using the computer. You create a document, send it to your printer, and somehow the document prints. Your device driver takes care of all the little details necessary for the printing operation to occur.

Drivers are one of the three most important broad categories of software in computers. The first is the operating system, the second is whatever applications are installed, including communications, and the third is device drivers. Drivers are important for two reasons. First, your peripherals won't work without them, and second, corrupted or out-of-date device drivers are responsible for most system crashes.

There are other reasons why it's important to keep your device drivers up-to-date. Sometimes a manufacturer will become aware of some kind of defect or glitch in the driver software and issue a fix. You will need it. A different manufacturer may have a driver for its own device that will cause a conflict with an out-of-date driver on your device. Over time, updates for Windows may eventually cause problems with an out-of-date driver.

Proper device driver management is essential to keeping your computer crash proof. If device driver management is unfamiliar territory, please pay attention. You'll be glad you did. Microsoft introduced the concept of Signed Drivers with Windows 2000 and continued with Windows XP. If a device driver is "signed" by Microsoft, it means that the driver has been subjected to meticulous, painstaking, extensive testing to ensure compatibility with your Windows operating system.

Anytime you install a signed driver, Windows checks it by default and also guarantees it has not been altered or changed in any way. If the driver is not signed, Windows alerts you with a strong message that the driver has not passed Microsoft's rigorous certification tests.

Windows will also ask if you want to install the driver anyway, and will do so if you give it permission. Keeping your computer safe from unstable software is always a good idea. Fortunately, changing the Windows default is relatively easy, but you need Administrator privileges.

Right-click the My Computer icon on the desktop, then select Properties. Click the Hardware tab and then the Driver Signing button. Choose Block to let this be the new default, and you're done. Windows will now block any device drivers that it does not recognize as signed.

Not all manufacturers send their drivers to Microsoft for testing. For small firms this can be an expensive proposition. Does this mean you should never install an unsigned driver? No, but you should do some checking of your own to ensure that the company has a good reputation in the industry. Sometimes a new device driver will prove unstable for various reasons. Windows XP has the ability to delete the driver and install a previous version. Open the Device Manager, and double click the drive that's causing problems. Switch to the Driver tab and Roll Back the driver to the previous version.

What we've discussed so far is fine if you're using relatively new equipment, but suppose you're having trouble with something that's old and the manufacturer has gone out of business. Chances are good that the original installation disk is lost or deteriorated to a point where it is no longer useful. There are many other reasons why you could have difficulty finding a device driver, but these are the most common.

In the past, finding the right device driver or firmware was often a tedious, time consuming, and frequently

(Continued on page 8)

Tweaking Windows' Taskbar

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology Website,
www.aarp.org

It's easy to use a key part of Windows' screen real estate, the taskbar, without really noticing it. Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components summarize what's happening on your computer and access running software. But unlike your car's dashboard, the taskbar can be customized for individual needs and preferences.

www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/howto/tweaking_windows_taskbar.html

Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate -- the taskbar -- without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components -- Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between -- summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks odd -- or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links.

Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid.

A key option -- Lock the Taskbar -- controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialogue box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices.

The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar -- handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons -- for example, representing multiple Word documents -- can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

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Choose Your Own "Home Page"

By Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES: <http://my.yahoo.com> <http://www.live.com> <http://www.msn.com>
<http://www.theexaminer.com> <http://www.mozilla.com> <http://my.netscape.com>
<http://www.google.com/ig?hl=en>

I work on a lot of different computers at a variety of locations, and one factor that consistently astounds me is that many people have blissfully ignorantly never changed their startup "home page" from its default. This is the page that first opens when the user connects to the internet. For example, many Dell computers have the Dell website set for the startup page when the user first accesses the internet, while Windows itself, unless otherwise changed, defaults to Microsoft's MSN home page, making it one of the mostly used startup pages. Many internet service providers (ISP), such as AOL, AT&T, and others changed the users' home page to the ISP's selected home page.

Startup or "home" pages are big business because they are commonly advertiser supported, and the more views (also referred to in the industry as "hits"), the more revenue generated by the host. This on-screen real estate is so valuable that a type of malware or spyware, sometimes known as homepage hijackers, will attempt to change your homepage to its client's home page, for which the miscreant receives compensation for each page such changed.

There are many different services offering home pages, and if the user finds one that he likes, it is very easy to make the selected page the new home page. The process for selecting the default home page is the same for most browsers. Using Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE), which is still the most widely used browser in the world, the process is simple. If the user visits a website that he would like as his homepage, he simply clicks on "Tools" on the menu bar, and then that will open a window where the home page can be selected. If the open page is what is desired, then click on the "Use Current" radio button, and the current page will be displayed each time the browser is loaded. If "Use Default" is selected, the home page will revert back to the Microsoft (or other manufacturer) default start up page. On the new Internet Explorer 7 (Beta), which offers tabbed browsing, a different home or startup page can be selected for each tab. For those who do not want to connect to any page at all when loading the browser, IE7Beta offers the option of a blank page. All versions of IE also allow for the manual entering of any selected internet address for a home page. To directly go back to the home page at any time, simply click on the little house or "home" icon on the menu bar.

Firefox (www.mozilla.com), one of the most popular browsers behind IE, offers a simple interface to select or change the homepage. Clicking on "Tools" on the menu bar opens a window where "General" can be selected, and then "Home Page". Firefox allows the address to be manually entered, or the current page loaded can be selected. Other options allow for the home page to be selected from a previously saved bookmark (Internet Explorer calls these "Favorites"), or the option for a blank startup page can be selected. Firefox also offers the little house on the menu bar for instant access to the home page.

There are many choices for a home page, which is totally up to the user. Some users use their web mail accounts as a home page, first displaying their email when connecting to the internet, while others may choose retailers, auction sites, employer web pages, search engines (such as Google or Yahoo), newspapers (such as the Examiner at www.theexaminer.com), or any other page of interest. While any page can be selected as a home page, the most popular home pages selected are usually news and information based pages.

My personal favorite, which I use on all of my computers, is "My Yahoo", at my.yahoo.com. I have found My Yahoo to be the most comprehensive and flexible home page. Being an information junkie, I have customized my My Yahoo page to include stock and mutual fund listings, news from dozens of sources, weather, lottery results, sports scores, my personal calendar, latest emails received, TV listings, and other information. My Ya-

(Continued on page 9)

(Claude Delphia, continued from page 4)

The number one limit was always trying to find someone who would lead it. Keep in mind that the leader isn't paid. For the most part, the SIG's aren't classes either. They are a meeting where people can share knowledge and gain knowledge from others. Hopefully the SIG leader would be advanced and would also have a sense of wanting to help others. You get a SIG leader for no other reason than that they want to help others: "Users Helping Users."

Many times over the years, the second biggest problem was where and when to hold the SIG. Many times they were in the offices or homes of members rather than public places. These are continuing problems. The day and time is always a major problem. How do you set it for the most members of the group. Choosing one day or another will always eliminate some from attending.

The third biggest problem was, and still is, the diversity or advancement of those participating. Each meeting will have attendees who are both beginners and advanced users. I can clearly remember members stomping out noisily because the presentation wasn't simple enough. For those who were more advanced, they just never came back or quietly left the meeting. Then there were the few, very few, who got mad because they thought that by paying their membership dues to MPCUG each year, that they were entitled to a SIG presentation just like they wanted and regardless of what anyone else needed. I can clearly remember members saying "Why can't you do what I want since I paid my membership?" Those sentiments, although few, have probably wrecked a few SIGs.

Setting up a SIG is a magic combination of the right leader, at the right time with the right idea of helping others, the right number of attendees who are willing to sit through meetings while others with less knowledge are helped, or while those more advanced talk about something that no one else understands. If these combinations don't happen, the SIG doesn't happen or dies.

The last killer is lack of regular attendance. No SIG leader wants to spend time preparing for a meeting only to have a few show up.

(Device drivers, continued from page 5)

impossible task. Nowadays, we have web sites such as www.driverguide.com to help us. The site has been around since 1997, and has seen many improvements. It has a unique membership base of thousands who collectively compiled a massive database of drivers, firmware, and support documents that is the largest and most comprehensive on the Web.

Recognizing that most people who use computers are not experts, they have devised an easy step-by-step process that will help you find and install drivers. There is an archive of hundreds of thousands of files containing not only drivers, but voluminous information on manufacturers including links to other sites with driver information. Also useful are the discussion boards where you can chat with others who have the same hardware, and learn from their experience.

After you search for a driver and find it, help doesn't stop. The Driver Summary provides you with a rundown of all the information you're likely to need to make the decision about whether or not to download and install the driver. This information is put together from the original manufacturer, plus ratings and comments from those who have previously downloaded and installed the file. It's nice to have everything in one place.

There are many web sites where you can find information about device drivers, but this is one of the best places to use as your starting point. Managing device drivers does not have to be a search in the dark. Use the tools available to you, and your system will be stable and a lot less prone to crash.

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(Windows Taskbar, continued from page 6)

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.

The notification area (called the "tray" in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be "pinned" to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or "classic" Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's "dashboard".

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring -- for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!

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(Home page, continued from page 7)

hoo, which is very easy to configure, directly offers thousands of choices. Many information resources, such as the Examiner, are now using "RSS" or "XML" feeds as a news source, and these can be added to My Yahoo often with a single mouse click. My Yahoo is also customizable with hundreds of backgrounds, color schemes, layouts, or other features to personalize it.

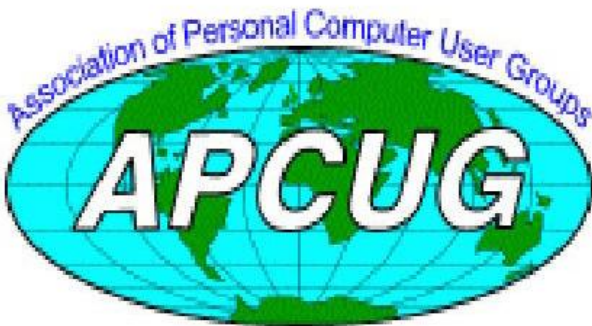
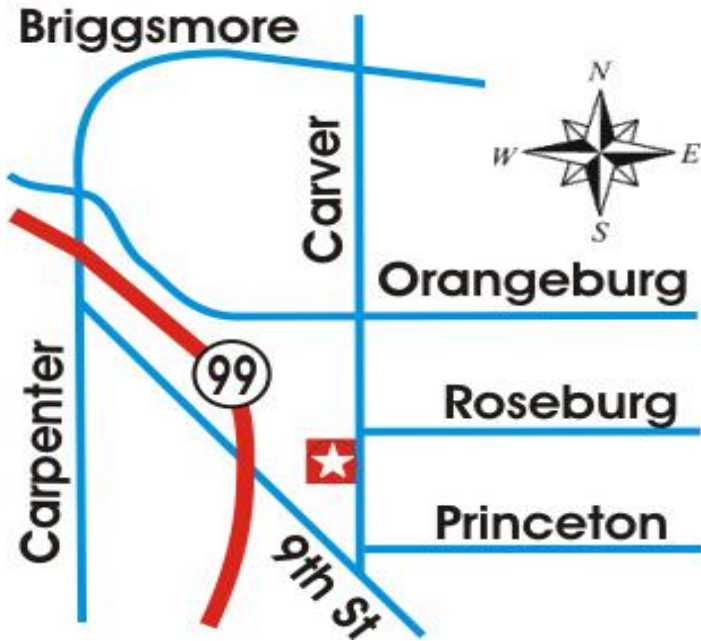
Microsoft is currently testing a new homepage intended to at first supplement its flagship homepage at www.msn.com, and maybe later replace it. This new homepage, currently in beta testing, is currently online at www.live.com. It will be a strong competitor to My Yahoo, offering news, sports, weather, email, and other resources in columns that are infinitely customizable.

There are countless other "My" homepages available, such as AOL's my.netscape.com, and other personalized home pages, including Google's "Personalized Home" link sitting quietly on the top right corner of the popular google.com website. All of these home pages can be easily customized to suit individual needs.

There is no need to continue to use the default startup or home page provided by your operating system or ISP. Investigate some of the alternatives, and increase your enjoyment of the web.

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.



Free classifieds for members. Email the text to the editor at editor@mpcug.net



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Elizabeth Leedom

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Be sure and check our web site at least once a week at www.mpcug.net

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PC Post

Editor: Bud Bondiotti

Editor Emeritus: William "Doc" Holloway - 1920 - 1996
Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus
Bud Bondiotti 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-

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 | 9:30 a.m. 2nd Saturday, Denny's 1525 McHenry Ave. |
| 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 volunteer time.



PC POST
Modesto PC User Group
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Modesto, CA 95352-5122

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time dated material

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