

PC Post



Official Newsletter of the
Modesto PC User Group.
Modesto, California

25 years of User helping User

September 2007 – Volume 25.09

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Our Next Meeting

Microsoft: free training if you know how to get it

Former vice president Bud Bondietti will be at it again at the Modesto PC User Group's next regular meeting on Thursday, Sept. 27, showing members and friends how to find and use free training from Microsoft.

Queries Bondietti: "Have you ever wished you could do more with Microsoft Word? Ever wondered how to make a great Power Point presentation?" Well, he promises, he will tell you how to use the web to get at easy-to-follow, free and next-to-free training from Bill Gates and friends.

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., Bondietti will present 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 in front or back of the building and enter on the south side.

**For directions to
Destiny Christian
Center
see page 11**

Important Meeting Dates

General Meeting — Sept. 27 — Destiny Christian Center
Photo SIG Meeting — October 2 — Denny's Restaurant
Board Meeting — October 3 — Ridgeway's Restaurant
Beginner's SIG Meeting — Oct. 8 — Denny's Restaurant



President's Report Mike Kumler

Unfortunately Mike has been out of town and could not provide an article this month. Look for his article next month.

-Editor

Membership Report Hank Mudge

Members renewing - Thank you for your support:

Alan Romander 6/08

Members dues expiring in May:

Tony Parisi

Members dues expiring in July:

Gene Richards Paul Martelli

Members dues expiring in August:

Joyce Frost

Members dues expiring in September:

Sheryl Powell

Members dues expiring in October:

John Schmidt Nancy Hanline Johnny Jones Robert Richart

Treasurer's Report Barb Cameron

<u>Income</u>		Modesto PC User Group Financial Statement August 2007		<u>Expenses</u>
Membership	\$ 72.00			
Interest on Savings	\$ 0.00			
Donations	<u>\$ 0.00</u>			
Total Income	\$ 72.00			
				Total Expenses \$ 75.00
		Current Assets		
		Checking - US Bank, Modesto	\$ 2205.04	
		Savings, US Bank, Modesto	<u>\$ 332.39</u>	
			\$ 2,537.43	
		Total Club Assets	\$ 2,537.43	

Claude's Bytes

By Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus, Modesto PC User Group

MPCUG 25th anniversary — In one way it seems just like yesterday. I met Liz Leedom over at MJC West where, as I recall it, the Apple group had allowed her to invite IBM PC users to meet with the idea of organizing a user group. I can't remember anyone else being there, but maybe Liz can recall that. This was October 1982. At that point she had produced the first PC Post which was mimeographed. The first meeting was held in December, and MPCUG was born. By January, the first organizational meeting took place at Stanislaus State, and MPCUG was on it's way.

Many key members attended that January meeting and by February there was an official list of members. I joined at that time. Unfortunately I'm the only member who has been a continuous member since that sign-up. Liz Leedom, our founder, took the next 10 years off before she rejoined MPCUG. Mary Ruggieri, the next longest member finally decided, several years ago, that the group wasn't really offering anything for her, and the meeting nights were in conflict with another in her life.

The next longest member is Barbara Cameron, our long time treasurer, who joined on June 20, 1986. Leonard Olives and Gene Richards's membership dates from 1990. Jim Goodman joined in '92 and Bud Bondietti in 1994. Hank Mudge joined in '93. Quite a few other current members joined around 1994-95.

Sadly we've lost a number of early members by death. One of those was "Doc" Holloway, a long time editor of the PC Post. He was there since there since that January meeting and contributed to the club until his death in early 1996.

While I've continued my membership — mostly recently as editor emeritus — due to health and other concerns, I've had to limit my physical participation. As officers and board members can testify, I've continued to keep up with many aspects of MPCUG. I even completed a recent PC Post when Bud couldn't finish that issue.

I've written for the PC Post since the first year of its publication, and I believe I served over a decade as editor.

I don't regret any efforts I have put in for MPCUG. Of course, there have been some difficult times, but overall I will never regret my involvement. Despite not being able to attend meetings regularly — night trips from Patterson at my age and vehicle condition aren't reasonable — I still maintain some key friendships from a distance. I can never thank Bud Bondietti and Jim Goodman enough for the many hours of help they gave me without question. I've also maintained a long time friendship with past MPCUG president Tom Crain and his wife. There are too many others to list here.

Hopefully our board of directors is planning a celebration where many of us can meet again as we've done on previous anniversaries.

Special Interest Group Meeting and Times

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	Jim Goodman	579-0122	6:30 p.m. 1st Tuesday, Denny's

Is there a laptop in your future?

by Sandy Berger, www.compuKISS.com

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Want to get a laptop so you can surf the Web from your lawn chair this summer? Or perhaps you just want to be able to share your Internet connection between your computer and your wife's computer?

In either case, a wireless network is essential, but sometimes interference makes wireless problematic. Let me shed some light on the subject.

The main component of a wireless network is a wireless router (or a wired router and wireless access point). I talked about routers in my previous *A Router Can Protect your Computer* article, so I won't go into the details and routers except to say that a wireless router is simply a router that works on radio wave frequencies to connect computer and other equipment without hard-wiring. A wireless access point works in the same manner.

If you are technically inclined, you might want to try to set the router up yourself. The setup is not too difficult, but adding the necessary security can be problematic for a technophobe. So if you are in that category, hire someone to set up the wireless network for you. If you try it yourself and can't get the security in place you will also want to consider hiring someone to secure your network. An unsecured wireless network leaves your computer vulnerable to infiltration by others and can cause numerous problems including identity theft. Once you add the security to your router, you are safe from having others jump on your network. The software for the security is included with your router.

For the most part, wireless networks work very well, but I have seen many cases where interference can cause problems. The most popular wireless networks right now are 802.11b and 802.11g. Both of these popular wireless connections work on the 2.4 GHz frequency that is already crowded with wireless telephones, microwave ovens, garage door openers, wireless mice, remote controls, and baby monitors.

So if you are thrown off your wireless network when your garage door opens or the wireless telephone rings, you will want to assume that you have two or more gadgets interfering with each other. When trouble-shooting wireless interference problems remember that the proximity of the items makes a big difference. If your wireless telephones work on the 2.4 GHz frequency and cause interference with your "b" or "g" router, you can, of course, go out and purchase phones that work on a different frequency to eliminate the interference. But you may not have to do that. Simply moving your telephone away from the router may do the trick.

While the 2.4GHz frequency is quite crowded, it does have 11 different channels to choose from. So look in the documentation that came with the phones and/or the documentation that came with the router to learn how to change the channel. Once you know how to do that you simply need to make sure that the router and the other piece of equipment are on different frequencies so they don't interfere with each other. Choose channel 1, 6, or 11 for your router to give it the best chance at a frequency that does not overlap with any other frequencies.

If you still have interference problems, you can consider purchasing an 802.11 n router. These are the newest wireless routers. They work on the much less crowded 5.8 GHz frequency. The "n" routers have greater speed and range than the "b" or "g" routers. I put one in my home where other routers had trouble transmitting the signal far enough and it works like a charm. I can even put my 5.8 GHz wireless phone right by the router without any interference. There is currently one caveat in choosing an "n" router. The "n" specification has not

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(Laptop in Your Future - Continued from page 4)

yet been completely finalized. That means that there could be some minor changes in the technology before it is completely standardized. So you will be purchasing a router that is what they call draft or interim model.

To the average user, this means that if the final standard is changed drastically it could possibly be incompatible with the “interim” “n” router you have purchased. That possibility is remote, and even if it happens, your system will still work. You might, however, not be compatible with other “n” systems. That is not likely to happen and, if the standard is changed when it is finalized, most router manufacturers will be able to send you a firmware update to make your router compatible.

I love my wireless “n” router, and while others have chided me for being on the “bleeding edge”, I don’t think I am taking much of a chance, and it provided a solution to my problem.

As more and more computer are being purchased for the home, wireless networking is becoming more and more popular. While we haven’t yet actually freed ourselves from our piles of wires, sitting on the patio, in the kitchen, or in the bedroom surfing the Internet without any tethers can be a very freeing experience.

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Set up Outlook Express YOUR Way

by Dick Maybach, a Member of the Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey

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You can greatly improve your e-mail experience by properly configuring Outlook Express, which is the default Windows e-mail client. Outlook, which is included with MS Office, is a completely different program, but it has a similar user interface for e-mail. The two programs are similar enough that you should be able to adapt these procedures to your version.

By default, Outlook Express has five local folders: Inbox, Outbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items, and Drafts. You can add more to make your e-mail messages easier to find in the same way that you organize your file system by using folders. Set up a separate folder for each major category of e-mail that you send and receive. With Outlook running, right-click on “Local Folders”, select “New Folder ...”, and put the desired name in the “Name:” box. You can now move the messages from your Inbox to the new folder. You will probably find some messages that don’t belong in any folder; just leave these in the Inbox.

You can change Outlook to operate as you find convenient by changing its rather intrusive defaults. Click on “Tools” and select “Options ...”. Under the General tab, I’ve unchecked everything, as I prefer not to be interrupted by every incoming e-mail. Under the Read tab, I’ve unchecked the first box (Mark messages read after 5 seconds). Under the Send tab, I unchecked the “Send messages immediately” item; many times I have second thoughts immediately after writing a response, and this gives me one last chance to make changes. Under the Spelling tab, I checked “Always check spelling before sending”. Finally, under the Maintenance tab, I checked, “Empty messages from the ‘Deleted Items’ folder on exit”. This does what it says and erases your deleted items. (Otherwise, why would you have deleted them? If you don’t check this item, your Deleted Items folder can contain a huge number of unwanted messages.) I left items under the Receipts, Compose, and Signature tabs at their defaults.

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Deleting spam

You can also use Outlook Express to delete spam. Click on “Tools” and select “Message Rules” then “Mail ...”. You can now tell it how to handle certain specific e-mails. For example, if you are tired of the constant stream of forwarded trivia, use the following sequence. In Box 1, check “Where the Subject line contains specific words”. In Box 2, check “Delete it”. In Box 3, click on “contains specific words” and type “FW:” in the text box. Finally, in Box 4, name the rule “Delete forwarded items”. When you now go to “Message rules”, you will see this item. You can uncheck it, to disable the rule or edit it, if needed.

Spend some time exploring the Message Rules tool to see what else it can do. For example, you can act on messages based on who sent them or what words they contain. You can select multiple conditions; for example, you can delete forwarded messages only from certain people. You can also select multiple actions; for example, you can move selected messages to a folder and highlight them. Finally, in Box 2 you should select “Stop processing more rules”, if the action is something other than delete.

Your last step is to order your rules list. The rules moving the desired e-mail to the correct folders should appear at the top of the list. Since they stop checking other rules after they move a message, they will prevent the spam filter rules from throwing out messages from people with whom you regularly correspond. To do this, in the “Message Rules” window use the “Move Up” and “Move Down” buttons to sort the rules.

You will have to reorder the rules each time you add a new one.

Turn off preview panel

Just opening an e-mail can result in your PC becoming infected with a virus. Even worse, Outlook Express’s default is that the preview panel opens any message that you select, which means you have no way of deleting a suspect message without opening it. You can disable the preview panel using the following. Click on “View”, then “Layout ...”, and remove the check from “Show preview pane”. While you are there, also uncheck the “Folder bar” item; you won’t miss it.

Outlook Express has only limited capabilities and is the target of many viruses. If its limitations and vulnerabilities concern you, consider Thunderbird, which is a free download, or if you have MS Office, Outlook...

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What is Net Neutrality? — An Editorial

by **Bruce Jacobs, Editor, Phoenix PCUG, AZ**

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Usually the articles in the newsletter are very black and white. The articles tell how to do something, or why you should backup... This article deals with a subject that is more controversial than that. It is my attempt to explain a subject is complex and which I can not discuss without my opinions coming into it. My opinions do not necessarily represent the opinions of the user group.

So what is Net Neutrality? In simplest terms it is a movement which has as a goal creating legislation or federal regulations which will regulate some plans of some ISPs.

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The specific plans that are proposed that have people the most upset is the idea of charging websites for preferred access to their customers. For example, they would like to get money from Google and if they do not they may slow the connection between you and Google.

I have to give some history here to explain some of what is going on. The Internet was mostly free of regulations. You can put almost anything up on a site and people could access it or they can ignore it. Your ISP is paid to give you access to the internet and does not care what you do while online unless you share your connection with your neighbors. There was no spam and very very few internet viruses.

ISPs also “oversold” their connections they knew that everyone would not try to get online at the same time so they used formulas to determine how much infrastructure they would need for each customer. In the old days this was mostly how many phone lines they needed for each customer. (How many remember getting busy signals when dialing in?). Even today, when browsing the web, typically you go to a site, its contents are downloaded to your computer. Then the computer becomes mostly idle while you read the page.

Most of the original ISP’s were companies which had as their primary business providing access to the internet. They were not phone and entertainment providers like we have today. Also there was no real conflict of interest if they were owned by a phone company.

Things have changed over time. As dedicated lines became available, the ISP’s started to separate the customers into two classes: Business and Home users. Business customers were likely to use their connection 24 hours a day and use more bandwidth. The business customers were charged more for access because of this. They at first policed this mainly using the honor system. In some rare cases, they would cut a violator off.

We now have lots of malware on the internet. This malware has caused lots of problems for the ISPs. Frequently a customer’s computer would get infected and would attack the computers belonging to other customers of the ISP. Computers would get infected and start sending out millions of spam emails. Or the infected computer would turn itself into a webserver to host pirated music or other nasty content. One partial solution to these problems was to use filters at the ISP to block this traffic. This was necessary evil in my opinions

Some people also are considered by the ISP to have abused the network. All of the above things that computers can do because they are infected have been done by customers on purpose. There are other things customers have done which have resulted in a single customer using more resources than the average customer. Sometimes these uses are not considered legitimate by the ISP.

Many ISPs have set up limits on how much bandwidth a customer can use in a month. I frequently download software from the internet. Legal downloads like Linux CDs and trial software. Because of this I am sure that I frequently use several times the average amount of bandwidth of the average user some months.

Perhaps I need to step back for a second and describe some of the costs of business that ISPs have. They have the typical costs of doing business: buildings, labor, taxes, electricity, etc.

They also have special costs that are almost unique to ISPs. They pay for the infrastructure that connects them to their customers (sometimes it is indirectly). The faster the connection to the customer, the more it costs the ISP. Frequently in the United States, the hands of the ISP are tied and the ISP can not easily increase the connection speed between them and the customer.

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The ISPs also pay for their connection to the Internet backbone. This is the part of the internet that connects all the ISPs together. The cost of this access is based in large part on the amount of data they send over the backbone and how fast a connection to the backbone they have.

Companies like Google, have to make contracts with ISPs and pay for their bandwidth and connection to the backbone either directly or indirectly as well.

Another revolution is occurring on the internet. This is the media revolution. New services are coming to the internet, which are only possible because more and more users have high speed access. I can purchase music or other content on line and download it to my computer. I can listen to an internet radio broadcast of a basketball game. I can watch a movie from YouTube or a live broadcast of an event. People are also using their high speed connections to make free phone calls using services like Skype.

According to ISPs these activities are putting stress on their networks in ways they had not planned for.

Many ISPs would like to use the filtering tools they have in place to limit the speed of access to these services. Critics of these plans point out that the ISPs have been advertising these same services to the public for years as a way of driving customers to their high speed access plans. Whether this is legitimate or not is a matter of opinion. If these types of changes are made, customers should be made aware of them so that they can make informed decisions when deciding which ISP to sign up with and what plan they want.

Another change that has occurred is the ISPs have changed from a business point of view. In today's world, ISPs are not generally the small companies that only provide internet access. They are phone companies, cable companies, cellular, and entertainment companies. Access to free phone service, movies and music is in direct conflict with the interests of the parent companies.

The ISPs would like the right to discriminate against some of this traffic and let other traffic go through unimpeded. This would probably be something like having two lanes of traffic. A fast lane for approved traffic, and a slower lane for the rest.

If you have made it this far, you can understand some of my opinions on these issues. You may not agree with them but the background was needed so you could understand.

I believe that ISPs have some right to regulate the traffic that is going through their network as long the primary purposes is to ensure that the network stays useable and they are upfront about what they are doing to everyone evolved. There is currently no law on the books that I am aware of that makes this a requirement.

However, no one should have to pay an ISP for priority access to their customers. I pay GoDaddy every month for use of a server and access to the internet based in large part on how many people visit our sites. We should not have to start sending checks to ISP's as well. Because the web is so democratic and diverse is why the web is as great as it is. If the ISPs are allowed to do this in market where they provide service, they will not be able to do this with fairness.

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Update to Vista? Maybe!

by **Jim Sanders, Vice President, North Orange County Computer Club, CA**

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The old adage never buy version one of any piece of software, is beginning to look like it should be applied to Windows Vista as well. I have read a number of articles from different sources talking about the problems that people have had trying to implement Vista. I have run into a few myself. The latest involved helping a customer move his documents from his existing Windows XP machine to a new HP computer with Vista Home Premium preinstalled. He was using the Windows Office 97 version of Outlook and wanted to transfer his e-mail, address book, and contacts to the new machine. The problem is Office 97 is not compatible with Vista. So the first thought was to go to the store and buy the Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office 2003, which includes Outlook 2003, while I worked on the machine.

So he drives to his local friendly OfficeMax store to find that they no longer have stock on the old 2003 Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office. However, they do have the new Home Office and Student 2007 version. At the same \$150.00 price as the old 2003 version, that seems like a good deal and is still reasonably affordable. Except, the Home Office and Student 2007 suite does **not** include Outlook and the next version up that does, costs another \$100.00.

A little research found another problem, the 2007 version of Outlook does not know how to import from the 97 version. Seems you can only accomplish that goal by first exporting to Outlook Express. The new computer came bundled with Microsoft Works. Works is not as full featured as Office, but good enough. So in effect, he would be spending \$250 dollars for Outlook. So we looked at the Vista replacement for Outlook Express – Windows Mail. Same problem, it does not know how to import from the Outlook 97 version.

As Eudora knows how to do that import function, and is of course free, I down loaded it to the new machine. It seemed to install OK, and opened when I clicked on the icon. I needed to learn how to do the import, so I clicked on help. A small error window popped up that said “Cannot open file.” To keep a long story relatively short, I eventually Googled the fact Vista has deleted support for the .hlp files. I do not know how many thousands of programs use those files, but unless they are a current program that the author is willing to update, you have a problem if you are using one of those programs. After a bit more research, I found a reference that said Microsoft has condescended to allow the proletariat to download a crippled version of those support files.

In a related scenario, if you are a user of Adobe’s software, but not the latest version, you will probably have a compatibility problem with Vista and your program. Adobe has a PDF file on their web site that gives the details of this issue. The location of that file is: www.adobe.com/support/products/pdfs/adobe_products_and_windows_vista.pdf. The way I read that file, new and very current releases of Adobe’s software will work or be updated for free. Somewhat older versions of Adobe’s software will have Vista updates that you can purchase. Even older versions of Adobe’s software will not have updates available at all. As one looks at the up front cost of the Vista OS , the cost of updating one’s hardware to meet the decent performance requirements of Vista, and the cost of updating (if you can) your existing software, sticking with XP for a while is looking better and better.

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For the latest information about the MPCUG — Check our website at WWW.MPCUG.NET

Why Update your Computer?

by Kathy Jacobs, President, Phoenix PCUG, AZ

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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

For Christmas this year, we gave my father a piece of software that requires Windows XP SP2. Imagine my surprise when he emailed back that he didn't have SP2.

Besides getting him a copy of SP2, I found out that I would need to explain to him why he needed it. I thought some of you might benefit from the information as well.

Like many computer users, my father views his computer as something that he should just be able to use. He doesn't think he should have to put any time into maintenance of the computer. I hear this quite frequently, but don't understand it. Would you buy a car and never put gas in it or never change the oil in it? Computer maintenance is just like the maintenance of your car.

The first line of maintenance for your computer should be Microsoft Update or Windows Update. Security holes are being patched every month. Those patches are made available to you for free from Microsoft for your benefit and for mine. Mine? Yes mine. If you don't keep the security holes on your machine patched, then you make it easier for someone to use your machine to attack my computer - even if I am patched. Also when I send you an email the programs can harvest my email address and add it to lists so that I get more spam.

The second line of defense is a good anti-virus program. Again, you can't just buy it and expect it to run forever. You need to update it regularly, and run it regularly. If you don't have your anti-virus up to date, you will only be catching the viruses that were out when you bought the program. That means that any virus that has come out since you bought the package can still sit on your computer and attack from there.

The third line of defense is anti-spyware software. This software will prevent someone from coming in and "owning" your computer. What do I mean by owning? Spyware programs are frequently used to keep track of what you do on your computer. A common misconception is that anti-spyware is only needed when you are on the net. In reality, spyware can be installed in seconds while you are downloading your email and then it will run while you are off-line. When you get on-line again, the spyware will call home and send back everything it has learned about your machine.

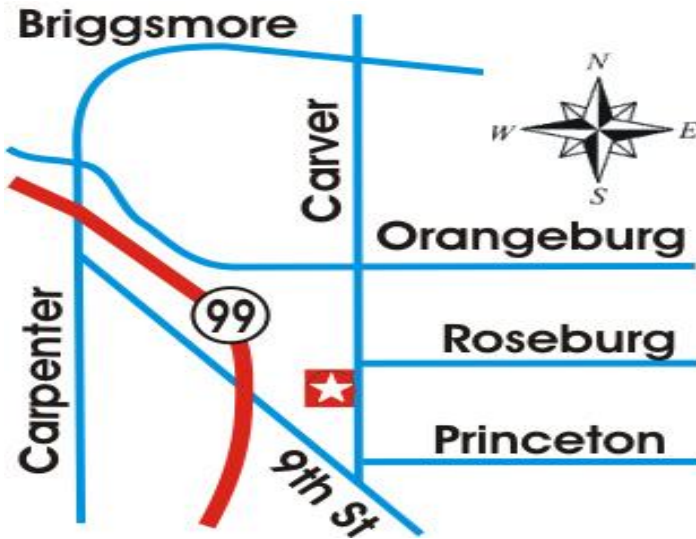
The final line of defense is your firewall. If you have Windows XP SP2, you have a firewall installed. By installing and activating your firewall, you make yourself less visible to the bad guys out on the web. If they can't see you, they may not spend the time to come find you. Especially if your neighbor has an open, unpatched, unprotected system. Adding the protection of an outbound firewall to Windows can also help plug leaks and alert you to behavior by friendly programs that you may still want to control.

The way I look at these four lines of defense is the same way I would if a bear is after me. I can't outrun the bear. What I can do is make it less likely that the bear will come after me. That is the same attitude I want you to take: Make your computer less open to the bears coming after it.

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The Club's Meeting Place

Our general meeting and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held at the Destiny Christian Center, 1161 Carver Road on the west side of Carver across from Sam's Food City. Parking is available both in front of and behind the Center. No parking along side of the Center, please.



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



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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 Bondietti**

Editor Emeritus: William "Doc" Holloway — 1920 -- 1996
Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus
Bud Bondietti and Elizabeth Leedom, Presidents Emeritus
Barbara Cameron, Member 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 online 12 times per year and is available to all group members as a membership benefit. Annual group membership dues are \$24.00.

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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 or digital photography.

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 2007**, **MS Office 2007**, **pdfFactory** and a Minolta laser color printer in addition to a lot of sweat and a few tears.