

# PC Post



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

**28 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER**

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**May 27, 2010**

## **Multi-Meters and Photo Programs and Memorial Day Slideshow**

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This month's multi-faceted presentation will be by Ray Nichols, MPCUG Computer Club member.

Last year, in January, our club members learned to use a Multi-Meter to measure DC and AC voltages; to measure resistance; and to check for circuit continuity or the lack of it.

As with most things, IT IS USE IT, OR LOSE IT. So, we felt it was time for a review of what we learned to make ourselves feel more comfortable and safer when dealing with things electrical.

If you bought a meter last time, bring it again this time. A few additional meters will be available for sale at \$2.

Bring along, for testing, a few of the batteries that you typically use, including ones that have worn out. After measuring them, the worn out ones can be placed in the recycle container. They will be delivered to the local recycle center.

Following this review, we will once again explore photo programs for the computer and the kinds of things that you can do with digital photographs, such as crop, enlarge, remove red-eye, straighten, convert to black and white or sepia, and print them or eail them.

As Memorial Day will follow soon after our meeting, we will conclude our meeting with a slideshow with that as a theme.

You are, as always, encouraged to bring magazines, books, videos, and cassettes to donate for Veterans.

If you have anything to contribute to our drawings, that will be appreciated, too.

*The group will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave., for its Random Access Special Interest Group, featuring questions and problems members are facing. At 7:30, following dinner, the presentation will start.*

### **Important Meeting Dates**

General Meeting - May 27 - Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry

Board Meeting - June 2 or 9 - Ridgeway's Restaurant

Beginner SIG - Looking for new location.



[www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com)  
[sandy@compukiss.com](mailto:sandy@compukiss.com)

## Solutions to Simple Problems

Here are a few real life computer problems and their solutions. Be sure to read this. Any of these things could happen to you.

**Problem 1:** The taskbar is the long horizontal bar that is usually found at the bottom of the screen. One day Glen found that it had moved to on the side the screen. He wants to know why it moved, and how he can get it back to the bottom.

**Answer 1:** Actually, this is a user- caused dilemma. Somewhere in his everyday computer use Glen accidentally moved the taskbar. This is a feature in Windows. The taskbar can be moved to the side or the top of the screen. Some people like it that way. It is, however, easy to get it back to the bottom. Just put your cursor on any blank area of the taskbar and hold down the left mouse button. While holding that mouse button down, move the cursor to the bottom of the screen. The taskbar will move with it. To make sure that this doesn't happen again, you can lock the right-click on any blank area of the the Taskbar. Now it won't move until you unlock it.



**Problem 2:** The Wi-Fi on fine when he used it at the home and he can't connect one at a nearby coffee shop.

Bob's laptop wasn't working. It was airport yesterday, but now he is to his own wireless network or the

**Answer 2:** The clue here is that we know that Bob was moving his laptop around just before the Wi-Fi went out. Laptops often have a small button or switch that allows you to turn the Wi-Fi off. Having the computer constantly search for a wireless network can consume a lot of power, so turning the Wi-Fi off can let you work longer on battery power when don't need to use the Wi-Fi.

The problem is that the Wi-Fi switch can be inadvertently turned off by just moving the laptop from place to place. The Wi-Fi switch is usually somewhere around the keyboard or on the front of the laptop. On some newer HP and Toshiba laptops, the Wi-Fi control is not a button at all. Instead it is just a place above the keyboard that you swipe your finger across to turn the Wi-Fi on and off. If you have a laptop like this, there will probably be some sort of light indicating the location. When you find the Wi-Fi button, press it your wireless network will connect again.

**Problem 3:** Linda's wireless mouse stopped working. She put in a new battery, but it still won't work. She wants to know how to get it going again.

**Answer 3:** The first thing to check is the batteries. Try another set, just in case. If the mouse still is not working and you are sure the batteries are good, look for a reset button. Some

wireless keyboards and mice have a very small button that you must press to reset them. Some have a button on both the transmitter and the keyboard or mouse that must be pressed at the same time to reset them. The transmitter is usually a small stick or device that is plugged into the USB port on the computer.

Problem 4: Lou's iPod is frozen. It simply won't work. He wants to know what to do.

Answer 4: Just as rebooting a computer can solve a temporary problem. The same is true of many handheld devices. First you can try turning the gadget off and turning it back on again.

If that doesn't work, the manufacturer often recommends what they call a "soft reset". This is usually performed by pressing a reset key by or a special key combination. A soft reset simply resets the device. It does not erase any data or information in the device. Often you can perform a soft reset even if the device is frozen and you can't access its menu. It is a simple process that usually takes less than one minute.

To reset an iPod you press and hold the Menu button at the top of the scroll wheel and the Select button in the middle of the scroll wheel simultaneously for about 5 seconds. The screen will go blank and then it will reboot and you will see the Apple logo on the screen. With a little luck, everything will be working properly again.

The instructions for performing a soft reset of other devices, including cell phones can usually be found in the instruction booklet or can be Googled on the Internet.

Problem 5: Roger just had some work done on his computer. So he unplugged everything and when the computer was returned, he plugged everything back in again. He labeled all the cables, so he is sure that everything is plugged in correctly. But now he can't get on the Internet. He is looking for a solution?

Answer 5: We know that Roger's computer is in good working condition and that the cabling is correct. We also know that he just moved his equipment around, so the first thing I would tell him is to check is that all the cables are secure at both ends. If they are, check the modem. Some modems have a Standby button on the top that can be inadvertently pressed. Just press it again to get the modem working again. If your modem has a Standby button, it is a good thing to be aware of.

Understanding a just a little more about computers and digital devices can make a big difference in how smart you feel about them. If you read this entire article, you are probably a little smarter now than you were before. So give yourself a pat on the back and keep on plugging along

## **Best Windows Shortcuts**

**By Vinny La Bash, Regular Contributor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida**  
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One of the better qualities of a good operating system like Windows is that there is almost always more than one way to do something. There are items you can select from a file menu, use a shortcut or execute some kind of keystroke combination to carry out an action.

There are some things you do almost every time you use your computer. The six following shortcuts all use a similar series of keystrokes. If you don't know about these shortcuts you probably haven't been using computers for very long, and you don't know what you're missing.

It doesn't matter whether you're working with music files, photos, videos, documents, spreadsheets or portions of a document. Simply highlight what you want with your mouse, hold down the Ctrl key, then press and release the indicated key. Don't forget to release the Ctrl key when you're done.

- For example, to copy a file, some text or any object: Highlight or select the item with your mouse and then hold the Ctrl button down, press the C key and release. Ctrl+C
- To paste the copied item or items: Ctrl+V (P was already taken for Print)
- Sometimes you want to move an object from one location to another: Ctrl+X
- Select everything on a screen or in a folder: Ctrl+A
- Print something: Ctrl+P (This is why you can't use this combination to paste).
- Oops, I shouldn't have done that: Ctrl+Z (Undoes your mistakes)

Now that we've covered the basics, we can move on to some good stuff. Microsoft introduced something called the Windows key when it announced Windows 95 back in the Stone Age. Also known as the Super key, Windows logo key, the WinKey, the Start key, and sometimes the Flag key, it has been with us ever since. Tapping the Windows key opens or closes the Start menu. If that were all it did there would be nothing else to say. There are several dozen shortcuts that you can easily use with the Windows key in combination with other keys to call up common functions. Here are a few of them:

- Win+D: Shows the Desktop
- Win+F: Opens the search function
- Win+L: Locks the Desktop and lets you switch users
- Win+M: Minimizes all open windows
- Win+R: Opens the Run box so you can type DOS like commands
- Win+P: Very useful with multiple monitors or an external projector
- Win+Spacebar: All open windows become transparent so you can see through to the desktop.

There are many others, but these are probably the ones most computer users would invoke most of the time.

Microsoft sometimes does something really terrific, but for whatever reason doesn't tell anyone about it. The company has created an alternate control panel which blows away any tool I've previously seen. Why the company keeps it a secret is beyond me. To create this tool you will need to create a folder, name it, put in a period, and type something called a

Globally Unique Identifier (GUID). A GUID is a special type of identifier used in software applications to provide a unique reference number. The value is represented as a 32 character hexadecimal character string. All you need to be concerned with is to type it accurately. Let Microsoft's engineers worry about the details.

You can create the folder anywhere, but the most logical place for it is on the Desktop. Make sure you're on the desktop and all windows are closed or minimized.

1. Right-click on an empty area of the desktop and choose New/Folder.
2. Name the folder. It doesn't matter what you call it, the magic is performed by the GUID.
3. After the folder name, type a period.
4. After the period type the GUID {ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C} (No spaces are allowed).
5. Press Enter

Open the folder and you have complete control over Windows 7. You might need several hours to count how many things you can do without having to hunt through layers of screens to access an important, but obscure function.

### **Word of the Month**

A **wiki** is a Web site that allows users to add and update content on the site using their own Web browser. This is made possible by Wiki software that runs on the Web server. Wikis end up being created mainly by a collaborative effort of the site visitors. A great example of a large wiki is the Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia in many languages that anyone can edit. The term "wiki" comes from the Hawaiian phrase, "wiki wiki," which means "super fast." I guess if you have thousands of users adding content to a Web site on a regular basis, the site could grow "super fast."

### **Make Firefox Even Better**

**By Steve Bass, Publisher and Self-appointed Chief Content Officer, TechBite**  
**[www.techbite.com](http://www.techbite.com) / [stevebass \(at\) techbite.com](mailto:stevebass@techbite.com)**



I know many of you still stubbornly use Internet Explorer. I used to, as well.

But Firefox, with all its lovely add-ons and tweaks, is just more fun to use.

Let's start with a something you might not know about: Firefox's hidden visual tab switching tweak. Right now, you can use Ctrl-Tab to cycle

through Firefox's tabs. But if you're using Firefox 3.6, the current revision, this tweak will give you a visual look at the tabs, just like using Alt-Tab in Windows.



### Firefox has a hidden feature: Visual tab switching

Turning on the feature takes two steps:

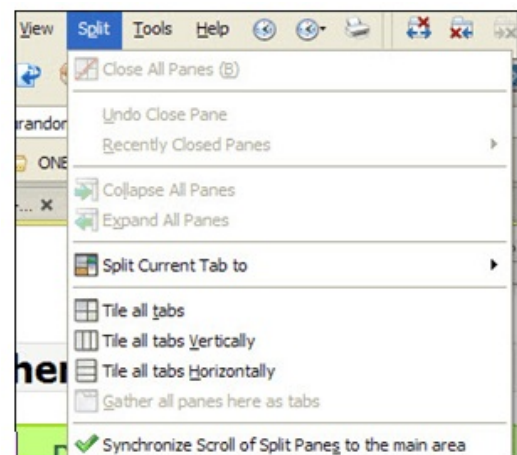
1. Go to Firefox's address bar, type `about:config`, and hit Enter. (Didn't know about this, eh?)
2. Type `browser.ctrlTab.previews` into the Filter field. When it appears, double-click it. (The value will change to true.)

### Five Handy Firefox Add-ons

Here are five add-ons I've recently used; they're easy to install and don't take much time to figure out how to use. Pay attention to the version of Firefox you have installed (Help, About Mozilla Firefox) to make sure the add-on is compatible with it.

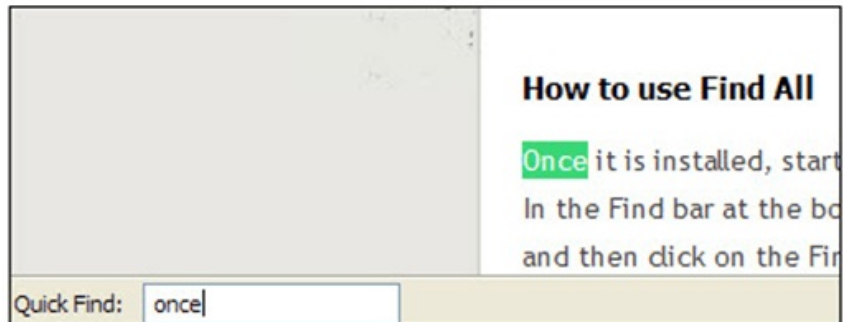
- Tired of squinting at sites with tiny fonts or weird background colors? Experiment with NoSquint to override a site's font and image sizes as well as change its foreground and background colors. If you like the results, tell NoSquint to remember the settings for your return visit to the specific site. <http://urandom.ca/nosquint/>
- I've experimented with SwiftTabs for a few weeks. It lets you use the F-keys to go to the next or previous open tab. It's a keeper -- and especially useful for those of us with Function keys along the side the keyboard. (Careful, the site has a name sure to offend.) <http://tinyurl.com/3746xsx>
- I like the idea behind Fox Splitter, an add-on that rearranges tabs as separate windows. The problem is I had trouble adjusting to splitting off tabs and keeping track of what went where. You might like it, and it's easy enough to install and uninstall, so give it a try. <http://tinyurl.com/24n3ct>

### Rearrange Firefox's windows with Fox Splitter

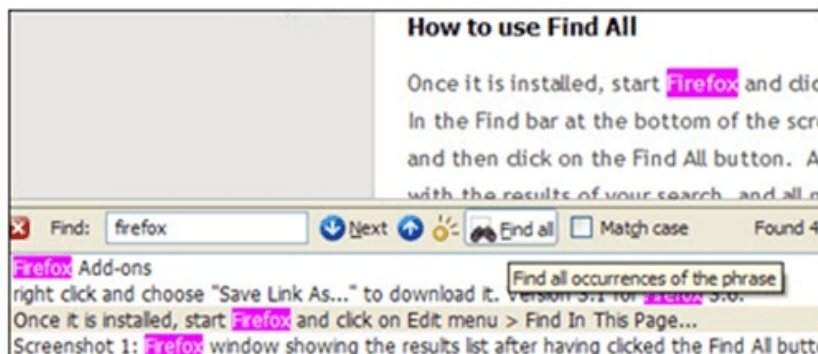


- Not all of Firefox's icons are easy to recognize; Menu Icons Plus gives me a nicer array of choices. I'm using it with XP, but Vista and Win7 may give you problems. <http://tinyurl.com/34op9fx>
- You know about Firefox's built-in Find features. Find All highlights every occurrence of the word, shows it in a separate window, and lets you click to go to the word. (See the screens below for instructions.) Très cool, no? <http://tinyurl.com/cc7apq>

Start Typing and Firefox starts a search



Click Ctrl-F to expand Firefox's Find feature



**Now use Find All: It does tons more than Firefox's default Find feature**

*Steve Bass is the publisher and self-appointed Chief Content Officer at TechBite; he continues to experience the cool feeling of having his own newsletter. Send him your feedback at TechBite <[stevebass@techbite.com](mailto:stevebass@techbite.com)>. To sign up for TechBite's free Steve Bass Technology newsletter, head for our [signup page](http://www.techbite.com/). <http://www.techbite.com/>*

*Steve's also the author of "PC Annoyances, 2nd Edition: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer," available on Amazon. It covers XP, but not Vista. If you haven't purchased your copy today, don't wait, supplies always seem to be limited...*

## Microsoft Offers Free "Fix it" Utilities

By Ira Wilsker, Member, Golden Triangle PC Group, Texas; Radio Show Host on KLVI and Columnist, the Examiner, Beaumont, Texas  
iwilsker (at) sbcglobal.net

<http://support.microsoft.com/fixit>

<http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com>

<https://fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget>

We have all heard the moans and groans about Microsoft's frequent lack of response in terms of its technical support, unless we are willing to pay significant support fees. I have had mixed success at using Microsoft's support forums, including no responses to multiple postings about my Windows 7 upgrade problems; countless other posts in that forum and other Microsoft support forums lament the same sentiment, that Microsoft is sometimes (often) non-responsive. The tide may be turning in a positive direction for Microsoft, as it recently released "Microsoft Fix it Solution Center" ([support.microsoft.com/fixit](http://support.microsoft.com/fixit)), and "Microsoft Fix it Center Online (beta)" ([fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com](http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com)). For those with Vista or Windows 7, Microsoft also released a "gadget," ([fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget](https://fixit.support.microsoft.com/reporting/gadget/fixit4me.gadget)) which will display a small image on the desktop showing that latest list of "Fix it" utilities. These small utilities will run on Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7.

What Microsoft has apparently done is to take many of the most common problems reported by Windows users and create a library of small utilities that can automatically repair those problems. Microsoft says that Microsoft Fix it will "Find and fix common problems." According to Microsoft, "We're working hard to automate solutions to common software problems in an easy, intuitive way that is available when and where you need it. So whether you are looking for a solution in help or support content, or an error report, Fix it provides a way to apply automated fixes, workarounds, or configuration changes so you don't have to perform a long list of manual steps yourself."

The Microsoft Fix it Solution Center offers online automated fixes for problems with Windows itself, Internet Explorer, Enterprise Products, Office, Email and Messaging (Outlook and Outlook Express), Windows Media Player, Xbox and Zune, and Games and Consumer



Products. In reviewing the dozens of fixes available under these headings, I can recognize many of the problems that I have

either experienced myself, or have heard of others with those explicit problems. One of the several issues that I have had with my Windows 7 machine is that sometimes the CD/DVD drive will not run, and it shows up on Device Manager with an exclamation point indicating that the drive has a problem. I reinstalled the manufacturer's latest drivers, and reinstalled my



CD and DVD software, and still the drive was not always recognized, and therefore would not work. I found a Fix it solution that said that it might be able to repair my settings such that my drive would be recognized, and within seconds of running the Fix it utility, my drive worked flawlessly, and has continued to run since the appropriate Fix it was run. Other Windows fixes include appearance issues, sound and print problems, system and security problems, and update problems. For those not sure if a fix is appropriate, most of the Fix it utilities check to see if that selected fix is appropriate, and will stop it from executing if it is not necessary.

Even though I generally do not use it, Internet Explorer (the "big blue e") is still the most widely used browser in the world, with more users than all other browsers combined. Even though it is widely used, users still have a variety of problems with Internet Explorer. Many of those problems may be instantly resolved by applying one of the fixes listed. By simply clicking on the fix, and following the on screen prompts, the repair will be completed automatically.

There are dozens of other useful utilities in the Microsoft Fix It Solution Center, and it is likely that users who are having problems with Windows and its companion components may find a solution here. It is definitely worthy of a try.

For those who want to have an even more automated solution to their Windows problems, they may prefer the Fix it Center Online (beta). Microsoft's slogan for this particular service is "Click, click, fixed." Microsoft claims that this service is easy, relevant, and allows the user to be in control of the process. The diagnosis and repair service begins by downloading a small (437kb) file "FixitCenter\_Run.exe". According to Microsoft, " Fix it Center finds and fixes many common PC and device problems automatically. It also helps prevent new problems by proactively checking for known issues and installing updates. Fix it Center helps to consolidate the many steps of diagnosing and repairing a problem into an automated tool that does the work for you." When run, the downloaded executable file will download a machine specific build that is explicitly for your computer, and highly personalized for the software and hardware on your computer.

For my new Windows 7 computer, the Microsoft Fix it Center beta identified 25 distinct functions on my computer that may be candidates for repair or maintenance. Clicking on an item will give a brief description of what will be repaired. Clicking on the "Run" button will obviously run the appropriate utility. Many of the utilities will perform necessary fixes and adjustments themselves, but some require some degree of interaction from the user. I tried several of the listed utilities, and had mixed results; some worked well and made noticeable improvements, while others were not successful. That is just the results on my particular Windows 7 computer; I had a greater rate of success on my older Windows XP computer, as well as other computers (XP and Vista) that I tried it on.

While not perfect, I can see where many of the issues and problems encountered by Windows users could be easily remedied by utilizing these utilities. It should be noted that the Fix it Center Online is still in beta, which means that it is not a finished and refined product, and that there is still some work to be done on it. Still, these free Fix it utilities should be considered as a potential solution for many of the Windows problems that we encounter.

## Computer Humor



### 7 Things to do when your ISP goes down

1. Dial 911 Immediately.
2. Open the curtains to see if anything has changed over the past 2 years.
3. You mean there's something else to do?
4. Threaten your ISP with an impeachment vote.
5. Work.
6. Re-introduce yourself to your immediate family.
7. Get that kidney transplant you've been putting off.

## Virtual Magnifying Glass 3.3.2

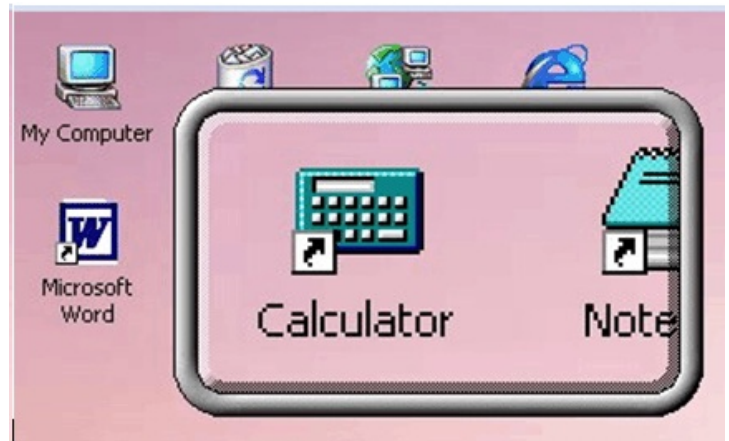
A free, open source, screen magnifier for Windows, Linux, FreeBSD and Mac OSX

By Jim Townsend, Managing Editor, Brevard User Group, Florida  
The Bug Newsletter, May 2010 Issue

Awhile ago I installed this program on my notebook computer, tried it out and forgot about it. I started to cleanup and defrag the hard drive and came across it.

So of course I had to play with it. The notebook has an LCD screen with 1280x800 resolution and some sites are hard to read with fine print, colored backgrounds and the dimming when it is on battery power.

When you click on the program to open it you have four choices to pick from, one of which is the web site. I clicked on that and read the instructions. Simple and to the point, "even a caveman could do it." Once the program is started, you can click the mouse and it will drop to the system tray on the task bar, where you can bring it up when needed. After a reboot you will have to restart the program again, so a shortcut on the desktop would be convenient.



The program defaulted to a 3x5 inch box, which I found could easily be changed, also with different levels of magnification. You could change the width to read a line of text and three or four lines in height, then just drag the box down the page.

Did I mention it was FREE. The author asks for a donation through PayPal; if you find it useful please consider paying something.

<http://www.magnifier.sourceforge.net>



## Smart Computing Tips & Fun Facts

[www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com)

### Easy Car Stereo-to-MP3 Player Hookup

If your in-dash car stereo offers an auxiliary input, take advantage of it by hooking up your MP3 player to it with a 3.5mm stereo audio cable. All you need to do is plug this cable into your player's headphone jack and plug the other end into your deck's auxiliary input. Start playing songs on your device, switch your car stereo source to Auxiliary, and enjoy your favorite tunes as you drive about town.

### Organize Your Cables

Hooking up a number of devices to the back of your PC in addition to all of the plugs you need to connect to a surge protector can quickly become a tangled and confusing mess. To maintain a cleaner appearance and to keep all of your cables quickly identifiable, use Velcro straps that wrap around your extra cords and label them with masking tape.

## ***Election Notice... Barbara Cameron Nominating Committee Chairman***

The election committee is pleased to submit the following slate to the general membership for consideration and voting at the June meeting of the Modesto PC User Group on June 24, 2010. Incumbents seeking reelection are these:

President (one-year term) - Mike Kumler

Vice President/Program director (one-year term) – James Goodman

Director At Large: Jack Selover

Nominations from the floor will be accepted during the voting process. Those nominated must indicate their willingness to accept the nomination according to MPCUG bylaws. The nominating committee submits this notice in good faith:

Barbara Cameron, Chairman; Bob Meyer and Vivian Neumann



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209-402-1936



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Elizabeth Leedom

**The Club's Meeting Place**  
  
Our general meeting and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held at the Denny's at 1525 McHenry Avenue



**apcug** Member of  
The Association of  
Personal Computer User Groups

### ***Modesto PC User Group Officers***

President	Mike Kumler	531.2262	president@mpcug.net
Program VP	Jim Goodman	579.0122	sig@mpcug.net
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Treasurer	Barbara Cameron	522.1389	treasurer@mpcug.net
Director-at-Large	John Selover		dal@mpcug.net

### **Appointed Positions**

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### **PC Post**

Editor Emeritus: William "Doc" Holloway – 1920-1996

Editor Emeritus: Claude Delphia

President Emeritus: Bud Bondietti – 1950 - 2008

### **Join The Modesto PC User Group**

To join MPCUG (or just get more information about us, go to our Website 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.

Opinions expressed in 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 unformatted MS Word or RTF text. Proofread and run your spell checker; watch for special upper and lower case in brand names. If you want to include a graphic, please send it as a jpeg attached to the E-mail submitting your article. Please note in the article where the jpeg should be placed. 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 E-mail as an attached file (Word or rtf). Please include your name, day and evening phone numbers.