



# NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory  
for your PC!*

## MAIN MEETINGS MAY 2013

**West Side.....Tue, 14**

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

**East Side.....Wed, 15**

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

**Fountain Hills.....Thu, 16**

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,  
Fountain Hills

### **Presentation this month:**

David will present and discuss  
the videos he made of the recent  
Computer Conference .

He also will bring us up-to-date  
on the changes going on  
in the computer world.

A special DVD will be given to all attending.

For date and time changes, check our



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### **Steering Committee:**

**Officers and Members who are present  
at the 6:00 P.M. West Side meeting.**

### ***INSIDE THIS ISSUE...***

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website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

"Help, I've fallen and I can't get up!" That famous line from an infomercial is often the similar type of cry people in tech support get as well in regards to their PC. The thing to remember and keep in mind is this... your problem as perceived by you is not the same as perceived by the computer professional.

Are you backing up your computer in the first place? When was the last one done? A couple days ago, weeks ago, months ago or longer???

Whose responsibility is it to protect & backup your computer in the first place? (Hint: It is not the computer professional). If you need urgent care, get 24 x 7 x 365 support. Are you testing your system backups by restoring them to a blank, new hard drive?

Drives are cheap compared to creating all that data all over again. When was the last backup you actually did? Online backup services are moderately ok, but nothing can be an onsite backup. Of course your PC's backup should be stored off site (like in a bank safety deposit box or better). Large drives can backup several PCs, use them in a rotation scheme - Grandfather, Father, Son, with the oldest replacing the newest. And, one stored off-site, in case of robbery, fire damage, etc.

It can cost thousands of dollars to restore data from damaged hard drives. Drivesavers.com is one such company. There are many.

A word about a good solid backup of a pristine system, free of viruses & malware. It can save your reputation, save your company, get the payroll out on time, do accounts payable and accounts receivable. In short you can stay in business! Also don't rely on only one backup!

Think about it this way... do you carry a spare tire in your vehicle? Why? So if you have one tire problem, you can change the tire and be on your way with minimal delay, headaches and lost business. Is it worth it? You be the judge. How long can you afford to be down?

Now apply the same logic to your PC. If it's critical info... guess what???. Back it up! You can get a very bad feeling, like OMG, I'm doomed if the data is

gone. Like peace of mind? **BACKUP YOUR COMPUTER!!** Now, not next week or next year, **NOW!!!**

Are you absolutely sure you don't have any malware - viruses, trojans, root kits, etc.? Do you even know what these things are? When did you do a cross check with another program like the temporary ones? or full featured versions? (See list later...)

Let's put it another way... do you use seatbelts, do you have car insurance, do you insure your house, have life insurance, ... etc. **WHY or WHY NOT?** If you insure the above, why not your PC???

When a PC hard drive is restored after any problem, even to the point of a replacement PC, you will be amazed and very relieved when you can once again look at the calendar, documents, photos, emails, basically - anything!!!

Are you updating your backups continually? Keeping some off site, on different sets of media, such as hard drives, tape cartridges, double layer DVD's or BluRay. What software are you using?

Want one free? (for a trial period) - most important major feature works just fine. Go here:

Acronis Backup Software - Acronis.com  
[www.acronis.com/Acronis\\_BackupBreakthrough](http://www.acronis.com/Acronis_BackupBreakthrough) in Backup Technology. The latest solutions from Acronis. Acronis has 255 followers on Google +.

*David*

**WE WANT TO INCREASE  
OUR MEMBERSHIP  
IF EACH MEMBER  
BROUGHT JUST ONE  
INTERESTED GUEST  
TO A MEETING  
WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL**

## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

### FROM YOUR EDITOR

What ever happened to the pre-eminent position the United States once held in world-wide trade of manufactured materials? Half a century ago, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler produced 80% of the cars made in the world. General Motors led the world in annual car production for over 50 years. Yet, GM had to be bailed out in recent years by the US government and Ford narrowly escaped bankruptcy. Chrysler has been sold twice, first to Daimler Benz, a German company, and then was sold to Fiat, an Italian manufacturer. Between them, the "Big Three" has ceased manufacturing or sold off 10 brands and twice as many models of the cars they produced a decade ago.

The same story holds true with commercial aircraft. The introduction of Jumbo passenger jet planes lowered world wide travel costs to the point that tourism has become the major economic engine for many heretofore unvisited countries of the world. The success of the Boeing 747 spawned similar planes by Lockheed and McDonnell-Douglas which between them dominated the market for three decades. Then came Airbus, European conglomerate owned and operated by Britain, France, Spain, and Germany. Eventually, despite the fact that Boeing has absorbed the other two American companies, Airbus has grown to become more than a competitor with a wider range of planes, including the world's largest commercial transport, the Airbus 380.

Similar scenarios have seen the decline of the companies manufacturing major home appliances. The buyouts and mergers of manufacturers of refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, and laundry washers and dryers have left only a small number of manufacturers. Familiar brand names may be on the units, but often the machines are made by a single corporation. Television sets have not been produced in the United States for over a decade. Even the ubiquitous wonder I-toys and smart phones may have internal parts made in the US but assembled in Southeast Asia. The concomitant loss of jobs appears to be permanent, despite futile government efforts to stimulate the manufacturing sector of the economy.

*Michael*

### SAMSUNG SSD

Samsung SSD

By George0 Harding, Treasurer,  
Tucson Computer Society, AZ  
December 2012 issue, eJournal  
[www.aztcs.org](http://www.aztcs.org)  
Georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net

The SSD (Solid State Disk) is growing in popularity, as it comes more available and prices drop. Their capacity is nowhere near as large as a hard disk, being 256 GB or less, but they are big enough to hold your operating system, with the rest of your files on the hard disk. The advantage of this arrangement is that the operating system starts up much faster than it does from a hard disk. The moving parts in the hard disk are certainly fast, but do not come close to electron movement alone.

I received for review a Samsung SSD 830 series 128 GB. It uses the SATA connection type, which for me required purchasing a power cable and one to connect to the motherboard. These two cables are inexpensive.

The kit came with a very nice Quick User Manual, a Review Guide, the SSD and two CD-ROMs. One of the CDs contains Norton Ghost, which can be used to back up your computer to the SSD. The other has several useful files. As it turned out, the SSD is not large enough to use for cloning my C: drive. But you can imagine that the process has been completed. This step is done with both the hard disk and the SSD connected.

Next, you shut down the computer, disconnect or remove the hard disk drive and restart the computer. It may be necessary to enter the BIOS to set the SSD as the primary boot device.

When you restart, it should boot from the SSD. You will notice that the boot process is much faster. Not only is startup faster, but loading programs, especially large ones, will also be faster.

About: Samsung SSD  
Vendor: Samsung  
[www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)  
Price: \$230

## MEETINGS

# CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

## PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

David will present and discuss the videos he made of the recent Computer Conference .

He also will bring us up-to-date on the changes going on in the computer world.

A special DVD will be given to all attending.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday Apr, 16, 2013
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 16)

- Wednesday Apr 17, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)

- Thursday Apr 18, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

Please Note: When attending a meeting we are not always in the same room. Check with the Front Desk or the Security Desk for changes.

## EXTERNAL STORAGE

### *External Storage*

By Dick Maybach,

member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ

March 2013 issue, *BUG Bytes*

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*n2nd (at) charter.net*

Although we use external storage much less than in the early days of home computing, it is still an essential technology for backing up internal hard disks, exchanging files among different computers, and expanding storage capacity. The increasing size of files had made obsolete many older technologies, and those that are still attractive fall into four types: electronic, optical, magnetic, and Internet.

There are many variations of electronic storage, but two are now dominant, USB memory sticks and SD cards. They have similar capacities with current "sweet spots" (capacities where the cost per byte is lowest) of around 16 Gbytes, although this is continually moving up. SD cards are typically faster, but appear to be less rugged with exposed connections and thinner packages. I have carried a naked USB memory stick in my key case for many years, and it has never failed, but I always keep my SD cards in their plastic cases. USB sticks have the further advantage that every computer has USB connectors, while SD access is less common, and although memory card readers available are very cheap, they also have low quality and often are unreliable. The circuits used for electronic storage do have finite lifetimes, in that they wear out after a (very large) number of writes; however, the risk is negligible for external storage devices.

Optical storage is problematic, because much of the available media is of poor quality and may begin to develop errors in just a few months. Even high-quality media rapidly deteriorate if exposed to high heat or humidity. For more on this, see my article,

Using DVDs for Long Term Storage, BCUG Bytes, June 2008, available at <http://www.bcug.com>. Actually, my own experience with CD-ROMs and DVDs has been good, although I'm careful to use only quality media. Of the dozens stored at home, some for several years, I've had problems with only one, which can be read only on the drive that created it.

On the other hand, the outer tracks of several music CDs stored in my car are no longer playable. Another problem is the low quality of CD-ROM and DVD drives, with Blu-Ray being especially bad. Blu-Ray drives are acceptable for play-back, but their lasers frequently burn out after writing just a few discs. This is unfortunate, as the capacities of CD-Roms and DVDs are rapidly becoming too low to be really useful.

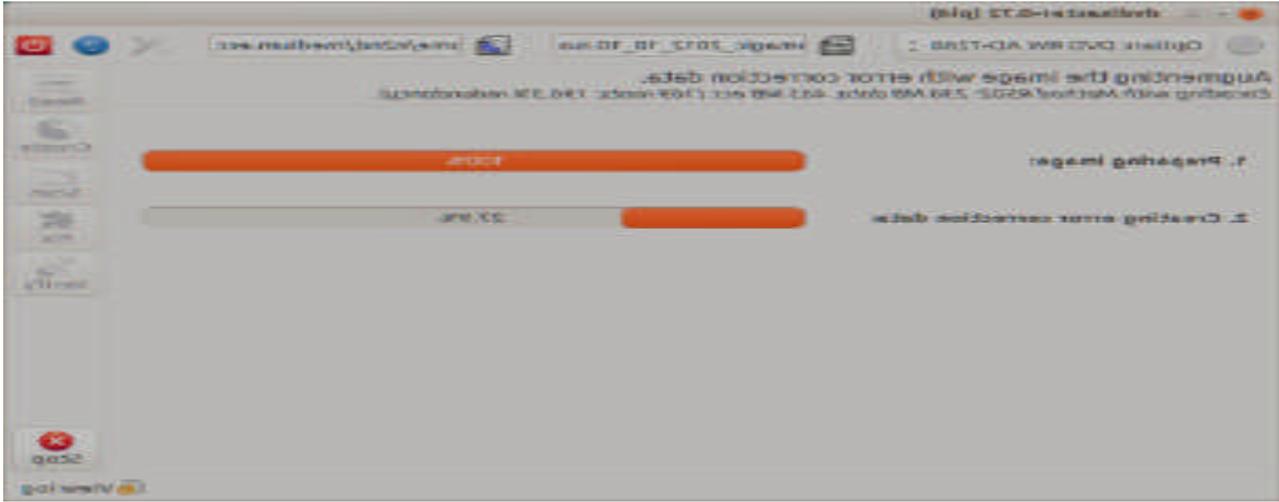
If you use optical storage for archiving, consider using the free program *dvdisaster* (<http://dvdisaster.net/en/>) for Linux, OS-X, and Windows, which adds error-correction and thus allows you to recover your stored files, even though up to 20 percent of the bits on the medium are corrupted. You need a disk-burning program that can create a file (called an iso-image) that is a bit-for-bit image of a CD-ROM or DVD and also has the ability to copy an iso-image to an optical medium. The procedure for creating an error-resistant disk is as follows.

- Use your disk burner to create an iso-image, which must be at least 20 per cent smaller than the capacity of the medium.
- Use *dvdisaster* to add error-correcting data to the iso-image. The screen-shot below shows this in progress. After creating this image, click on the *Verify* button to check that it's good.
- ♦ Finally, use your disk burner to write the iso-image to the optical medium.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## EXTERNAL STORAGE

(Continued from page 5)



(Note the small blue circle containing a question mark at the upper left of the screen-shot. Clicking on it brings up an extensive manual in your Web browser, which you should read carefully.) Periodically scan your optical media (using dvdaster's *Scan* button) for errors. If they begin to appear, recover the data using dvdaster (which will produce an iso-image), create a new disk, and discard the one with the error. Until the medium begins to develop errors, you can read it like any other disk using your usual software.

Magnetic storage, in the form of external hard disks, offers high transfer speed and high capacity, making it attractive for many applications. It also has the lowest cost per byte. To achieve this performance, these devices are assembled with very tight clearances, which means they must be sealed against airborne contamination. The magnetic disks cannot be separated from the motor and head assemblies, making these devices much larger and less rugged than electronic storage devices. Here, you have a choice of interfaces with USB being the most common, followed by E-SATA. USB-3 drives are beginning to appear, but are considerably more expensive than USB-2, although this will surely change, probably soon.

Diskettes are now obsolete, for good reasons. Their capacities are tiny, and their reliability is low. You can still buy drives, but their quality is very poor, with many delivered dead-on-arrival or failing very quickly. If you still have valuable data on diskettes, you should transfer it to a better medium soon.

Internet storage, commonly called "the cloud" is expanding rapidly. Modest capacities, up to around five Gigabytes, are widely available without charge. Transfer rates can be low, often just a few tens of kilobytes per second, and of course, the storage is available only if you have an Internet connection. There are also concerns about how secure the data is and whether it will continue to be available if the vendor goes out of business.

Which of these approaches you use depends on your application. For synchronizing the data among your own computers, Internet storage is the most convenient. Once you have set it up, the contents of the synchronized directories are always identical, no matter which computer you use to make changes. Since the information resides on every PC, you lose nothing if the cloud vendor discontinues the service.

(Continued on page 7)

## EXTERNAL STORAGE

(Continued from page 6)

For transferring files between your PC and a friend's, a USB memory stick (up to a few Gbytes) or a USB hard disk (for larger transfers) is the best choice. Almost every computer has a USB port, so your friend doesn't need to install any special software or hardware to effect the transfer. I always carry an eight-Gbyte USB memory stick, formatted as FAT-32, in my key-case, and I've never found a computer that couldn't read from and write to it. (Actually, my stick has two partitions, a seven-Gbyte FAT-32 one for transferring files, and a one-Gbyte Linux one containing Parted Magic. See my article *Parted Magic: Lots of Disaster-coping Tools*, BCUG Bytes, April 2012, available at <http://www.bcug.com>. This means I always have the ability to transfer files and a tool kit to solve computer problems.)

For backing up your PC, an external hard disk is the only reasonable solution. These feature high capacities, fast transfer rates (especially if equipped with a USB-3 interface), and high reliability. Their bulk and relative high fragility are not serious problems in this application.

External hard disks are also good for archiving things like photos and financial data, but you could use DVDs, provided you add error-correction using and store them in a benign environment. For added security, consider making more than one copy, and either transfer the information to new media every few years or periodically scan it for errors using dvidisaster. Archival storage is an especially difficult problem. Computer technology is changing fast, and you must stay alert lest you lose the ability to access your archives (as happened to me when 5 ¼ inch diskette drives disappeared from PCs). For example, if you used dvidisaster to safeguard your archived DVD, you must be sure not only that the program runs on your

new PC, but also that it uses the same methods as those used to record the data, and of course the new PC must be able to read DVDs.

For sharing photos or files with friends, Internet storage is hard to beat, although mailing them a DVD or CD-ROM also works well, especially if they want to show the pictures to their friends.

To expand internal disk storage capacity, the preferred solution is an external hard disk with an E-SATA interface, although USB-3 is not a bad solution. Most likely, you would use E-SATA for a desktop, since it requires an expansion card, and USB-3 on a laptop (USB-2 if your laptop is older or not top-of-the-line). Mac owners could consider Firewire or Thunderbolt.

As you can see, there is no single solution, unlike in ancient times when diskettes were universal (or if we go back to near pre-history, cassette tapes, audio tapes, punched paper tape, or even punched cards). However, there is a good and inexpensive solution for every application.

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## CONNECTING USING USB

### Back to Basics

Connecting Things to Your Computer – The USB Port  
Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida  
December 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor  
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Printers, cameras, flash drives – is there any limit to what you can connect to your computer? Today we want to look at how to connect all those wonderful devices to your laptop or desktop. Almost all such connections (which are not wireless connections) are through a “USB” port cable. USB stands for Universal Service Bus and just like a city bus can carry all kinds of people, a USB connection can connect almost anything. The purpose of this article is to provide you with the information you need to connect things using the USB connection port. All computers have at least two and maybe three or more USB ports. They are rectangular “holes” in your computer, approximately one-half inch wide by 3/16 inch thick. Any device you purchase which can connect to your computer will probably come with a connection cable, with one end being a USB port connector. The other end of the cable will probably have a different shape which plugs into the device you are connecting (camera, printer, mouse, etc.). Here is how you connect something to your computer using this port.

Using the connection cable, plug your device into your computer’s USB port. (The USB plug does have a “right side up,” so if it doesn’t fit one way, turn it over).

That’s it. There is no second step. Oh -- maybe you have to turn on the device you are connecting.

Yes, it’s simple, but I think it is helpful to know a little of what is going on and how to best use your USB ports on your computer. For example, did you know you can have as many USB ports as you need? If you have three USB ports and they all are used and you have a fourth device to connect, what do you do? You go to a store and buy a USB multiplier (or “splitter”) that connects to one USB port and provides four more ports! Believe it or not, you can

connect over 100 different devices through one USB port.

So what basically happens when you connect something to a USB port? Well, the computer, all on its own (please make sure the device you are connecting is turned on), identifies the device and establishes the communication code or language it must use to work with the device. If the computer does

not have this code its memory it will go to the internet and get it. So it is usually a good idea to be connected to the internet when plugging in something new to your computer. Pretty neat, huh?

If you are connecting some kind of memory device, such as an external disk drive or a flash drive, there will be an exchange of data to and from the device while you are using it. You can save files to the device and you can change or delete files already on the device. The only danger here is what if you disconnect the device (i.e. unplug it) while it was receiving information from the computer? The file could be incomplete – a file error. So, the idea is to make sure that the device is done transferring data before you disconnect it. Here’s how to safely disconnect a memory device:

In Windows, when you connect a memory device to your computer you will see a new icon in your SYSTRAY– those little icons by your clock on the right end of your taskbar. The icon will look like a USB cable connector plug and a green circle with a white checkmark in it (in Windows 7). It will be tiny, so look closely. (If you don’t see it, click on the little arrow to the left of these icons to reveal the icons that didn’t fit into this area). Whenever you connect a new memory device to your computer Windows assigns it a drive letter. Most computers have the main “C” drive and a CD/DVD drive assigned the letter “D”. When you connect another memory device to your computer it would then be assigned the letter “E”. When you are ready to disconnect your device, click on this icon. You will then see a list of all the memory devices connected to your computer (most of the time it will be only one device). Click on the specific device on the list to tell the computer you are through using it. You should then see a message displayed that says it is safe to remove the device. It is just a little extra step to make sure you are not unplugging a device while it is in use. Another way is to simply turn off the device before you disconnect it.

There are other connection ports (i.e. “holes”) in your computer where you can plug things in, like the ISDN connector, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and other cables. Make sure you are plugging your USB plug into a USB port – match the shape carefully! Remember, there IS a “right side up” on the plug too, so if it does not go in one way, turn it over and try again. Never force a plug into a port!

USB ports have made connecting many devices very easy. So go ahead and buy that camera or jump drive and plug them in!

# OUTLOOK.COM

Outlook.com

By Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster, Crystal River Users Group, FL

December 2012 issue, CRUG newsletter

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

lpage46 (at) tampabay.rr.com

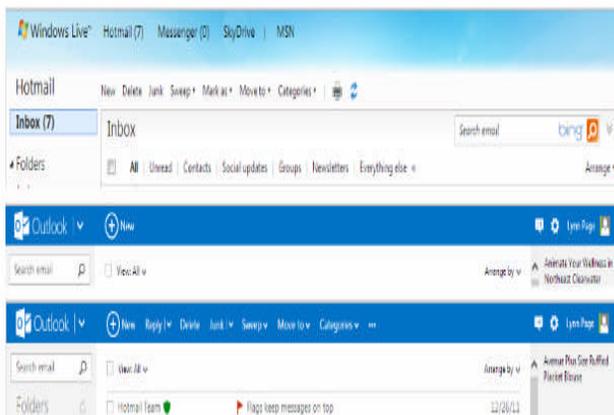
Microsoft has upgraded Hotmail and Windows Live to a new Outlook.com cloud email service. My accounts were just 'upgraded' this week. It is always hard to make changes so I will let you know what I have seen.

The introductory email has links to get started with Outlook where you can read information about the service, get a new email address, connect your account with your social media accounts and provide feedback. I have more than enough email addresses to keep track of and don't want to connect my email with my Facebook accounts so didn't even look at those options.

## Interface

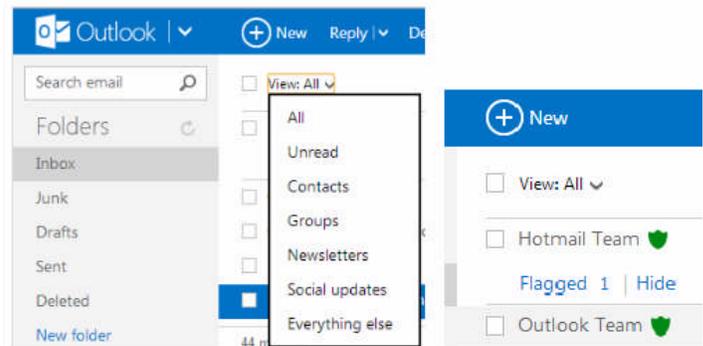
The Outlook interface has been streamlined from the Hotmail interface. It looks cleaner and takes less screen space. That can be important if you are checking email from a small portable device.

One notable feature is that the menu bar only shows message items when an email or emails have been selected. Without that the only item is the New Message icon.



Further streamlining is seen in the filtering options. In Outlook to filter messages, click View All and select a filter category.

Another nice feature is the set of icons that are displayed when you mouse over a message. Click the icon to reply to, trash or flag the message.



Outlook Folders and Quick Views are the same as in Hotmail. You can define rules to automatically handle messages as they come in like flagging messages, moving them to folders and setting alerts for your mobile phone. Quick Views automatically sorts and shows items by category.



## TEXRING YOUR DOCTOR SOON

Will You Be Texting Your Doctor Soon?

Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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

sandy (at) compukiss.com

Texting has become very popular. We've all seen teenagers texting each other across the dinner table or from the front seat of the car to the back seat. You may be surprised, however, to find that older people are also texting and now even some doctors are using texting to communicate with their patients.

Because texting is so popular with the younger crowd, many older folks have started texting just to keep in contact with their children. Over and over again, I have heard the lament, "They (the kids) just don't answer the phone. The only way I can get them to respond is to text them."

Yet, when these people start texting, they find it just as useful for everyone they communicate with. Texts are less intrusive than phone calls. You don't feel forced to run and answer the phone, you can deal with a text whenever you like. With a text, you don't disturb a person who happens to be sleeping because he is in a different time zone. And you don't disturb him during an important meeting, but you still get your message across. Two other advantages are that texting is faster than phoning and text messages are archived on your cell phone so you can search for previous conversations.

The newer cell phones make texting easy. With on-screen keyboards and predictive text, you can tap out a message quickly and easily. If you don't like to type, you can speak your message and have the phone type it out for you with pretty good results.

Although some predicted that texting would die out with the proliferation of smartphones, that doesn't seem to have happened. Texting does not use data, so it is often cheaper than using email on a cell phone. Also, several large cellular providers now offer free texting with their share plans, making it a very cost-effective method of communication.

Kids are still texting, and older people are also texting. In fact, in the future, you may even text with

your doctor. If you think about it, texting is a quite suitable way to communicate with a doctor.

My conversations with several doctors indicate that they are happy to embrace texting patients but there are several hurdles to overcome before texting between physicians and patients can become routine.

Dr. Adam Schaffner, a New York City plastic surgeon, who specialized in aesthetic plastic surgery of the face, breast and body has been texting to communicate with his patients for several years. He says that "texting promotes comfort for the patient." In his practice, post-operative patients who used texting to communicate with him fared better than others. He says, "This type of access (texting) empowers patients and is of great benefit during the immediate post-operative period." He also finds texting a great way to start a necessary conversation with patients and found that patients who texted him had a reduced number of office visits. This, in effect, could reduce the cost of health care.

Although Dr. Schaffner finds texting "extremely beneficial", he sees several hurdles to this type of texting becoming commonplace in the medical industry. The first is that the time spent texting is currently not billable or covered by insurance. So doctors who are currently taking advantage of the benefits of texting are doctors in fields like plastic surgery and concierge medicine whose main patient base is not covered by insurance.

Second is the investment of capital needed to implement secure texting platforms to comply with HIPAA laws brought on by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Because of this individual doctors and even most medical clinics are still not embracing texting. Besides offices like Dr. Schaffner's, you will only find doctor-patient texting in large university hospitals that have more technology funding available.

There is little doubt that many of us will be tapping out texts for years to come. Perhaps we will be texting to improve our health as well as to improve communications.

## LIVING IN THE PAST

Living in the Past?

Computing in a Software Museum  
John Davey, Workshop Leader,  
Cascading Style Sheets Workshop  
Philadelphia Area Computer Society  
www.pacsnet.org  
<http://pacs-css.blogspot.com/>  
mail (at) jadavey.net

It was at a recent meeting of my computer user group that it hit me – I do my computing in a museum.

It's not my hardware. My printers from several presidential administrations ago, and parts from 286 and 386 laptops, have all been delivered to the local recycler. Ditto that 19-inch CRT monster. (Though I did keep the Leading Edge Model D that started me off – you never know when you will need a fallback.)

No, I'm talking about software.

It was at the PHP session. The topic was email, and the session leader was talking about scripting an HTML email message. He threw in the suggestion to include a fallback version in case a subscriber was using an email client that did not display HTML. It was as if he was talking about writing a webpage for someone who might be using Netscape Navigator 4 - - but I actually use an email program that does not display HTML pages, at least not with my setup. Not surprisingly, I was the only one in the group. And that got me thinking about how many software relics that I use at home, and even at work, and that I actually reinstall every time I buy a new computer.

Mail from Another Era

The email client goes back to the 90's. Java was a hot new platform, and OS/2 was competing with Windows as a PC operating system (that's a whole 'nother story). A developer built an email client in Java so that it could run on any operating system. It was called JStreet Mailer, and it was perfect for people like me who dual booted between OS's. I made it my email program.

As good an idea as it was, it did not take off. The developer ceased working on the mailer, but he was generous enough to release the source to some volunteer coders. They maintained it for a while as Polarbar Mailer. The last update was somewhere around 2003.

It is a very well thought out program, but needless to say, the feature set is behind the times. And frankly, under Windows 7, it freezes up regularly. I still use it every day, though. At this point, I have so many addresses and folders of saved emails that the task of migrating to a new program is too daunting to consider.

New Data, Old Base

My database program is even older. Back in the DOS days, when Lotus was its own company, they developed the 1-2-3 spreadsheet. When the transition to Windows came along, they purchased a great word processor called Ami Pro and renamed it Word Pro. And they purchased a database program called Approach. It was a relational DB, not flat file, and it was a good one. They put these together with some other programs and marketed the package as SmartSuite. They had both OS/2 and Windows versions, so this one was also perfect for dual booting.

Then came Microsoft Office -- enough said. The last version of SmartSuite was released around 2002. I bought that update for about \$35 from a vendor at a computer show. Approach itself was worth many times that amount. I used it to learn how to design and build databases. I did one for my passwords and another for our user group's attendance sheets, and I still use them both. The program may be behind the times, but it works, so I hang in there – again, it's too much of an effort to move.

A Pre-App App

Then there is my address book. I had forgotten this one until I went to do my Christmas cards.

I had a Palm III that I bought used from a guy back when Palm was the thing. It came with a nice desk-  
*(Continued on page 12)*

## LIVING IN THE PAST

*(Continued from page 11)*

top application that synched with the Palm and made it easy to enter information in either place. (You could also beam information between devices – remember that? The original Near Field Communications.) The Palm itself has long been retired, but there were so many contacts in that desktop program, it was easier just to leave them there. So every December, I crank up the Palm Desktop program to retrieve my old addresses for the holidays.

### From the Days of DOS

I go even farther back with my diary program. It's not even a Windows application. Lotus again comes into play. The story is that Mitch Kapor, the mind behind 1-2-3, had a habit of keeping notes on slips of paper. Looking for a way to organize information the way spreadsheets organized numbers, he had Lotus develop a personal information manager called Agenda – running in DOS.

Agenda was my kind of program. It was a free-form database with calendaring functions and organization on the fly. I could create projects, enter notes, set up due dates, and track completions. I bought the first version from an online auction for a Boston PBS station, back when I used CompuServe for access -- pre-internet of course. (I bought a 2400 bps modem at that same auction to upgrade from a 1200 model.) The second version of Agenda came out in 1992, and that was the end of development. When Lotus developed SmartSuite for Windows, it bought an organizer called -- yup -- Organizer. It just wasn't the same.

For whatever reason, I can't find a program that works my way as Agenda does. These days I have to run it in DOSBox. People coming by my desk want to know what website I am using or whether the program would work for them. I just tell them to find something else. It's too much to explain.

### A Pioneer's Second Act

The last example is not as ancient, but I have never heard of anyone else using it. In the early days of PC's, before Lotus 1-2-3, there was VisiCalc, a prototypical spreadsheet designed by Dan Bricklin. It was one of the foundations of the desktop computer revolution. Years after VisiCalc, Dan developed ListGarden, an application that lets web designers convert website entries into RSS feeds. I found it because I was looking for exactly that type of utility, and it was literally the only one that I could find. I have been using it for years, and I know that it is time to move to a CMS that will handle news feeds, but here again, there is a lot of work to make that transition. It's on my to-do list. But for now, ListGarden does the job, and I appreciate it being available. I have searched in vain to find anyone else using it, so I guess I am a leftover.

All of this is not to say that I don't keep up with new things. I'm writing this article on a dual-monitor system using Office 10 and saving the document to Dropbox. I keep notes these days in OneNote. And I am learning Access for my database management.

But the old software still works well enough for now. So I'll hang onto Agenda for now -- and wait for the next version.

**ATTEND OUR MEETINGS**  
**Get help on your PC problems**  
**Learn what is new in**  
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**Network with your Computer Friends**  
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**WE HAVE THREE MEETINGS**  
**EACH MONTH**  
**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

# WINDOWS 8 - THE BASICS

## Windows 8 - The Basics

By Howard Lewis, Program Coordinator,  
Midland Computer Club, MI  
January 2013 issue, Bits and Bytes Newsletter  
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With Microsoft's release of Windows 8, there are a number of significant changes in the interface. Many people say that this is the biggest difference in the Windows interface since the release of Windows 95 in 1995 (which is forever in the world of technology). Part of the rationale for the change in the interface is to make a consistent interface between PCs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. With this article, I will introduce some of the major concepts in the Windows 8 interface and will delve into some of the basic usage issues.

Knowing that many of the current applications are desktop specific, Microsoft has two different types of interfaces built into Windows 8. The primary interface is the Start screen which is shown when Windows 8 is first started (Figure 1).

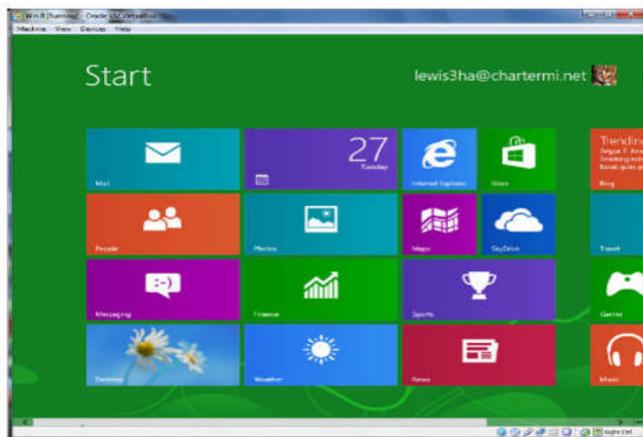


Figure 1 – Windows 8 Start Screen

The Start screen contains Tiles which will launch Windows 8 specific apps. One of the unique things about these tiles is that they can be "live". In other words, if you have a weather app running in Windows 8, the current temperature for a specific location will be displayed live. The same will be true of stock, sports scores, news, etc. The interface is designed for a touch interface, but can easily be navi

gated with a keyboard and mouse. The second interface is the Desktop screen (Figure 2). The Desktop screen looks (and is) very much like the very familiar Windows 7 interface. The one major difference is that the Start menu is missing (replaced by the Start screen).



Figure 2 - Windows 8 Desktop Screen

Almost all applications that have run under Windows versions since Windows XP will run in this mode. Most current Windows users will feel very much like they are working in Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7. At this point, I probably spend 80% of my time in the Desktop. The default Start screen tiles include a tile (lower left Tile in Figure 1) to directly access Desktop mode for easy access. Any Windows applications not designed for Windows 8 will automatically run in Desktop mode. The major changes (and focus of this article) is the Start screen.

Those who are familiar with smartphones and using a touch device will probably have no problem navigating the Start screen interface. The problem is for those of us who are desktop- or laptop-centric. If you are using a mouse, the key focal points should be the corners of the screen.

Both the upper-right and lower-right corners bring up what is called the Charms bar (Figure 3) and it will be located on the right side of the screen. This bar includes Search, Share, Start, Devices, and Settings. All of these things were incorporated into the Start menu on previous versions of Windows. The

*(Continued on page 14)*

# WINDOWS 8 - THE BASICS

(Continued from page 13)

Charms bar is available from both the Start screen and the Desktop.



Fig. 3  
Charms Bar

The upper-left corner brings up the App Switcher bar (Figure 4). This bar will be located on the left side of the screen. The App Switcher displays all apps that are currently running in either the Start screen or the Desktop and makes it easy to switch between various apps. The lower-left corner will allow you to switch between the Desktop and Start screens. The App Switcher is only available from the Start screen.



Fig.4  
App Switcher

When you are on the Start screen or in a Windows 8 app, there are two other bars of interest, one at the top of the screen and one at the bottom. One or both of these bars will appear when you right-click in an app or on a tile. Both of these bars are app/Tile specific, but in certain apps the top bar is called the Places bar (Figure 5) and the bottom one is referred to as the App Menu (Figure 6).



Figure 5 - Places

The Places bar allows you to specify information specific to an app, whereas the App Menu allows you to specify certain properties for a tile or app. All of these bars are dynamic and change depending on the focal point of Window 8.



Figure 6 – App Menu

A couple of other important points that have perplexed various users. Windows 8 was originally designed for the computer to not normally Shutdown and therefore would not be turned off. Most modern devices (tables, smartphones, etc.) run using very low power processors, so they can run for 10+ hours without being connected to power, plus they also go to sleep very easily to conserve battery. Many people from the desktop/laptop world are used to turning their computers off periodically and will want to continue to do Shutdowns. To accomplish this, simply go to the Charms bar, Settings, Power. From here you can shut down or restart the computer.

Another frequent question is how to close a Windows 8 app (Desktop apps close in the normal manner by clicking the "x" in the upper-right corner of the window). Most Windows 8 apps are designed to run in the background at all times, much like an iPad, etc. Since Windows 8 apps don't have an "x" in the upper-right corner to close the app, you close the app by taking the cursor to the top edge of the screen where the cursor will change to a hand. Now click and drag to the bottom of the screen. This will close the app.

In future articles, I will cover various shortcuts and tips for making Windows 8 even easier.

## Short Circuits...zzzt!

A Michigan judge whose smartphone disrupted a hearing in his own courtroom has held himself in contempt and paid \$25 for the infraction. He has a posted policy in his court room stating that electronic devices causing a disturbance during court sessions will result in the owner being cited with contempt. During a prosecutor's closing argument as part of a jury trial, the judge's new smartphone began to emit sounds requesting phone voice commands. The judge said he thinks he bumped the phone, and the embarrassment left his face red. He has used a Blackberry mobile phone for years, and said he wasn't as familiar with the operation of the new touchscreen Windows-based phone. "That's an excuse, but I don't take those excuses from anyone else. I set the bar high, because cellphones are a distraction and there is very serious business going on," he said. "The courtroom is a special place in the community, and it needs more respect than that." During a break in the trial, the judge held himself in contempt, fined himself and paid the fine.



"We're a couple now, Daphne, I should carry your iPad home for you!"

Authorities in Louisiana say they tracked a man accused of stealing drugs from a pharmacy because he left behind a pickax he used to break in — and forgot to remove the price tag. The County Sheriff says the sticker included a bar code indicating when and where the pickax was bought. A store near the pharmacy had a surveillance video from the night of the burglary, showing the same man and a vehicle license plate. Drugs from the pharmacy were found during a search of the suspect's home. He was arrested and charged with pharmacy burglary and drug possession.  
Associated Press

The ruddy-cheeked, camouflage-clad boy in the photo smiles out from behind a pair of glasses, proudly holding a gun his father gave him as a present for his upcoming 11th birthday. The weapon in the photo, posted by his dad on Facebook, resembles a military-style assault rifle but, his father says, is actually just a .22-caliber copy. And that, the family believes, is why child welfare case workers and four local police officers visited the home and asked to see his guns. "They said they wanted to look into my safe and see if my guns were registered," the father said. "I said no; in New Jersey, your guns don't have to be registered with the state; it's voluntary." New Jersey's Department of Children and Families declined to comment specifically on the case but says it often follows up on tips. In this case, the family believes someone called New Jersey's anonymous child abuse hot line. The investigators showed no search warrant and declined to give their names, the father said. The agents and the police officers left and nothing has happened since.  
Associated Press

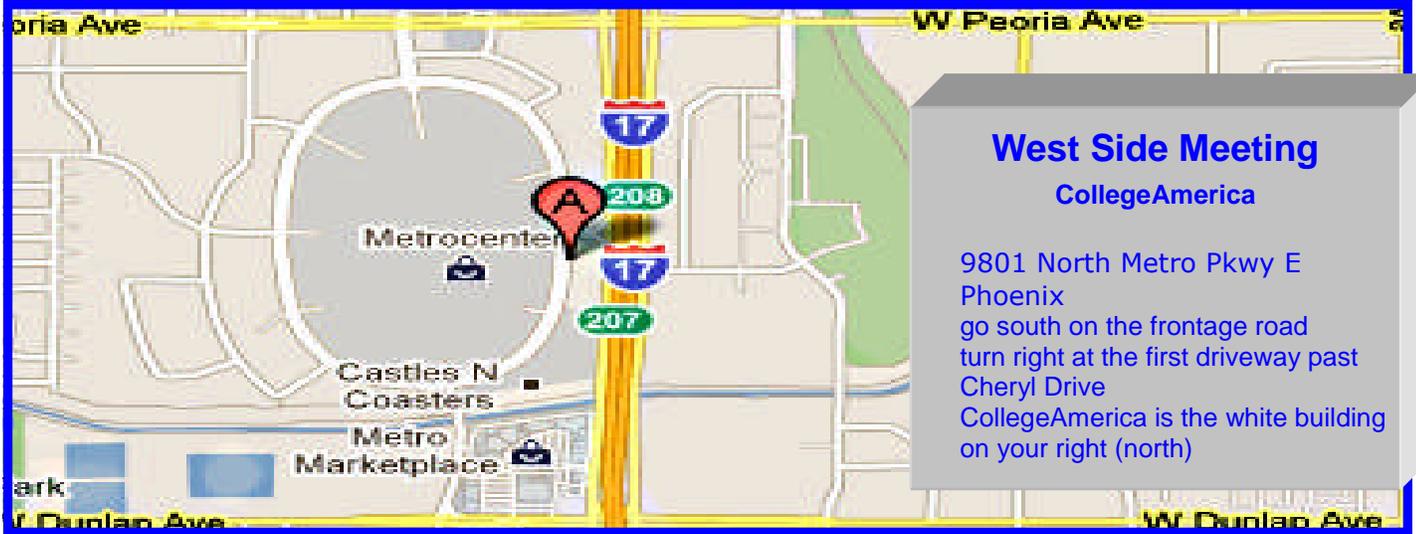


"Am I paying for that?"

A Massachusetts man says he sees Jesus Christ on a drop cloth he used while spray-painting his shutters, according to video from the local TV station. The man says he used the drop cloth for the first time four years ago and used it 50 to 60 more times before he noticed the image. "My heart went a million miles an hour," he said. "I was hyperventilating." From a distance, it's just another cloth, but if you take a closer look, "it looks like Jesus Christ," he said. He plans to frame the image and keep it in his home.  
Associated Press

*These Items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.*

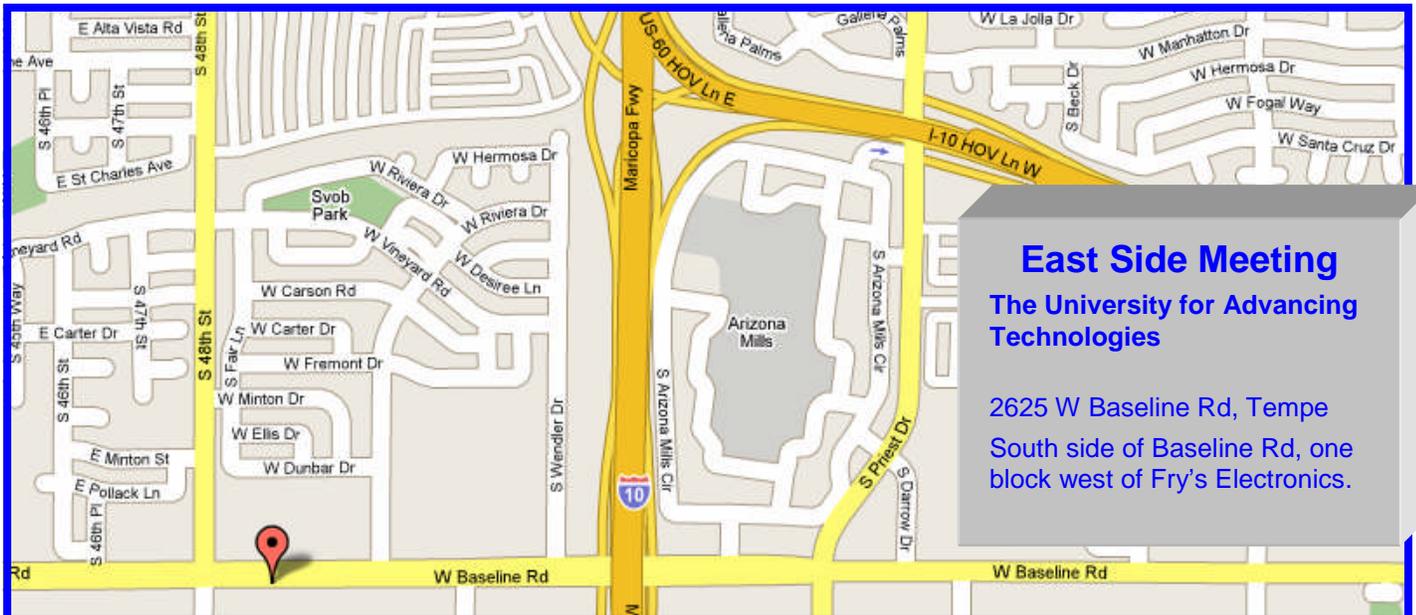
# HOW TO GET THERE



## West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

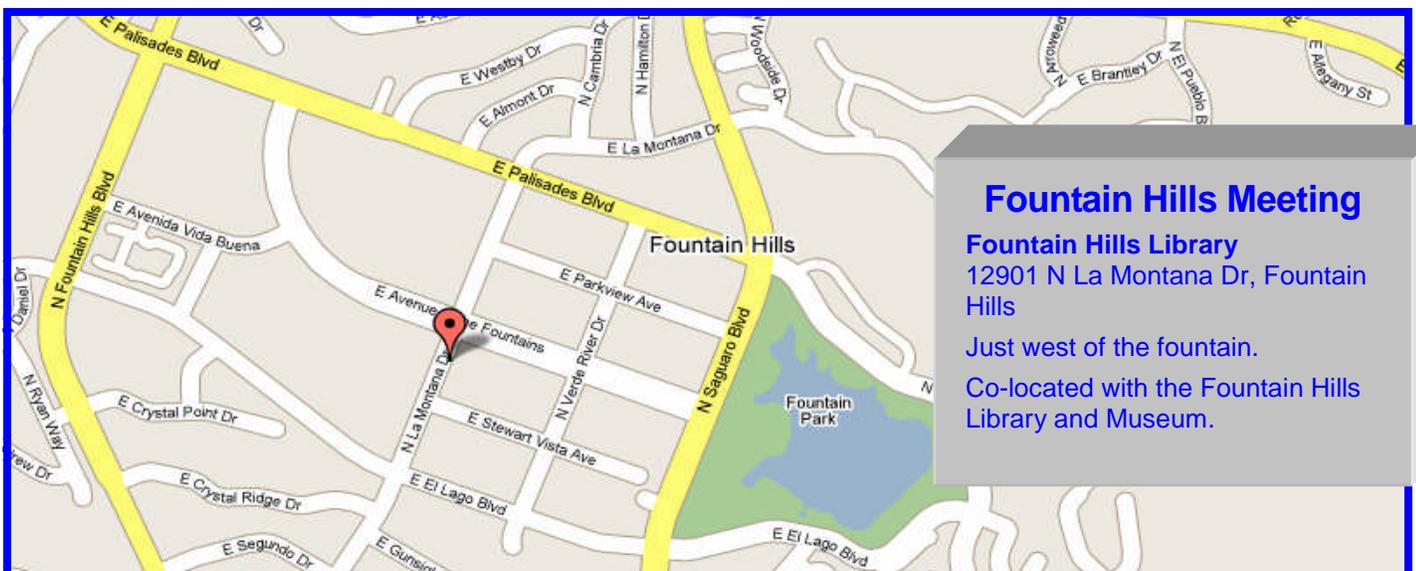
9801 North Metro Pkwy E  
 Phoenix  
 go south on the frontage road  
 turn right at the first driveway past  
 Cheryl Drive  
 CollegeAmerica is the white building  
 on your right (north)



## East Side Meeting

The University for Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe  
 South side of Baseline Rd, one  
 block west of Fry's Electronics.



## Fountain Hills Meeting

Fountain Hills Library  
12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills

Just west of the fountain.  
 Co-located with the Fountain Hills  
 Library and Museum.

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**The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Usersroup is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.**

*DUES \$36  
THROUGH  
DEC 31, 2013*

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City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones — Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: We **do not** share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club website.

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one?  Yes  No

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Legibly)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Release my address to vendors ?  Yes  No Note: Phone numbers **will not** be listed.

May the club share your e-mail address with other members ?  Yes  No

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Please do not share my e-mail address.

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