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# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

### Thanks

Let's start this newsletter by thanking our old friend Dave Methvin for coming and speaking at the April meeting. Unfortunately, I missed the meeting (and work) with one of the flu bugs that was going around, so I can't offer my own commentary. From past experience, I'm sure Dave discussed Windows Vista in a clear and erudite manner. And then probably some questions from the audience dragged him off topic onto other areas where he also spoke in a clear and erudite manner.

On behalf of CMUG, thanks for coming, Dave.

### This Month's Meeting

This month sees the return of Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County Library. As you may remember, Amy came by back in January. She talked about the library's forays into open source software to save money, and what the future of the computer side of the library looked like. She also brought one of the 7-inch Asus Eee computers to show off (tho I believe she said they had decided against getting more).

This time around, Amy will bring a couple of her technical helpers, Donna Mitcalf and Luis Salazar, to give us a more technical look at what's going on behind the scenes at the library.

### Elections

One of the CMUG Board's duties is to provide the membership with a slate of officer nominees at the May meeting, to run for office at the June election meeting. John Weske is willing to run for Treasurer again, and Bill Baxter as Secretary. But Mike Kerwin is not willing to continue as President, and Mike Hayes does not want to continue as Vice President.

After much discussion, the Board is nominating Paul Van Bloem (ie, me) for President, and Art Silverplate as Vice President. This means the Board has done its job, and has a full slate of

officers nominated for the June elections.


The main problem with this is that I will not serve as Newsletter Editor if I'm elected President. So, if I'm elected at the June meeting, CMUG will have no Newsletter Editor, as well as no Program Coordinator. Realistically, the Board thinks the lack of a newsletter and haphazard meeting programs will mean the group will not be able to continue much longer.

Nothing is carved in stone here, but the reality is that without someone assuming the Newsletter Editor job, in some form or other, and someone else taking on the Programs job, CMUG will be on its last legs. If that situation continues for long, the Board thinks we should just disband the group, perhaps at the end of the year.

So, some food for thought.

On the subject of Elections, other candidates can be nominated at the May meeting. If they are willing to run, their names will appear on the June ballot. Names can also be written in on the ballot, but again that should be limited to willing candidates.

### Gigapixels

I followed a link to the article below. It's not a reference to a new digital camera that takes pictures with billions of pixels, or at least, not exactly. The Times of London ([http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech\\_and\\_web/article3938717.ece](http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/article3938717.ece)) explains about a gadget, currently in beta, which uses your digital camera to take 100 to 300 pictures of a scene, carefully overlapping them to create a zoomable "experience" if whatever you're looking at. (There's also a 90 second video demonstration 

### Next General Meeting

Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County Library returns with a few colleagues to discuss more technical aspects of what the library is doing with open source software.

Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Next Windows SIG Meeting

Tuesday, May 27, 7 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

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with the article.)

You can see how this works by visiting the Gigapan.org website; try looking at this night shot of the London waterfront ([www.gigapan.org/viewGigapan.php?id=3332](http://www.gigapan.org/viewGigapan.php?id=3332)). The zooming experience reminds me a bit of those silly TV shows where the computer expert calls up a still or video of a city street, and magically zooms in to see the car's license plate, or see a bad guy's face from half a mile away.

According to the article, the Gigapan robotic camera mount is still in beta. Once it's available, it's expected to sell for around \$300; you'll also need some sort of camera that's compatible with it. The work on this has involved Carnegie Mellon and NASA, and Google has also helped fund it.

I can't see ever printing one of these gigapixel photos, and the bandwidth to host one won't be trivial, but this sounds like an interesting way to use the bandwidth and processing power available to us these days.

## Batteries

There was an interesting article about

rechargeable batteries in the bunch that APCUG sent us this month. However, it turns out almost all of the article was copied from Sanyo's Eneloop site ([www.enelop.info](http://www.enelop.info)), so I think I should just refer you there.

Basically, the Eneloop is an improved rechargeable battery design. The main improvement is that it doesn't "self-discharge" nearly as much as existing rechargeables. I don't know about you, but I found that unless I remembered to recharge my lithium-ion rechargeable batteries, they would be dead in the camera whenever I went to use them. I ended up solving the problem by investing in some lithium disposable batteries; I don't take that many pictures, so they are still working well.

I have picked up some Eneloops (and gave them as Christmas presents). I'll report when I have some personal experience, but just the fact that they ship already charged is a plus. (Normal rechargeables lose power while sitting on the shelf, so they always need to be charged before their first use.)

- Paul Ye Ed



## Power Supply Tips

by Dan Hanson, via APCUG

We have all experienced the computer crashing seemingly for no reason. When it does, we blame Windows or a hardware problem or maybe a power surge or undervoltage. All are possible culprits but one often overlooked possibility is the power supply of the computer.

The power supply is the metal box with a cooling fan next to it. Typically it's in a back corner of the case and you plug your power cord into it. When you plug the power cable into the wall, the power supply converts the AC (alternating current) that runs through your home or office into the DC (direct current) that the computer needs.

If you bought your computer from a superstore or discount retailer it may have low-cost, low-capacity power supply installed which may not be enough to handle all the things you do with your PC. For example, if you have upgraded your PC with newer or more components (like another CD or DVD player/burner, more RAM or another hard drive) then the power supply that came with your system may not be up to the task.

The physics of power supplies (ambient temperatures, 3.3V vs. 5V vs. 12V, etc) make it so that a power supply rated at certain wattage, say 300W, may not really provide that maximum wattage load. Some experts claim that power supplies are most efficient at 30-70% of their maximum capacity. So if you are nearing the upper end of that range, you can be in for trouble.

Because the power supply gets a rush of AC (alternating current) when the computer is turned on and it heats and cools each time it is used, it is more prone to failure than many other components in your PC. You may notice a slight burning smell before it shuts down. Sometimes the cooling fan stops working and the system overheats.

Newer systems let you monitor the status of the power supply from Windows. Servers and other mission critical

computers often have more than one power supply so that when one dies, the other kicks in and the system stays operational.

## So What Can You Do?

Next time you buy a PC, don't just get a cheapo system with a sub-standard power supply unless you never plan on adding memory, drives or other components to the machine.

Take care of your power supply by keeping the cooling fan away from the wall or anything else that might block the air flow and make the fan work harder (and die sooner).

Keep the PC off the carpet or other surfaces where it may suck in particles and clog the fan. Cooler is always better with electronic components.

Periodically, blow out the fan and case with compressed air to get rid of dust and other particles that may clog up the fan and overheat the system components.

Add up the wattage of the components in your system to see if you are near the maximum of the power supply. E-mail us at [dan@greatlakesgeek.com](mailto:dan@greatlakesgeek.com) for a list of Estimated Power Requirements of common PC components.

If that is too difficult for you, look to see if most of the slots in the back of your PC are filled and if the drive bays in the front are being used. Those are indications that you may be close to maxing out your power capacity.

If you have a need, you can buy and install (or have someone else install) a new, heavy duty power supply. They come in several standard form factors to fit in most PCs. This may not be a project for beginners though.

**Get more tips at [www.GreatLakesGeek.com](http://www.GreatLakesGeek.com)**

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Dan Hanson is the Great Lakes Geek and also Director of Computers Assisting People in Ohio ([www.capinc.org](http://www.capinc.org)). He can be reached by email at Dan at [magnuminc dot com](mailto:magnuminc dot com).*



## Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

### Friends Helping Friends!

A friend uses his computer a lot, but doesn't belong to any computer organization. I gave him a couple of PC Magazines I had read and he enjoyed them enough that he subscribed. He mentioned that he had a problem with his laptop not connecting to the router and I told him about the tech support included with the PC Magazine subscription he had just purchased. He called them and they helped him fix the problem quickly. His words later were "Boy; I've already gotten my subscription money back in just one day."

### Eat or Be Eaten

I saw where EMC will acquire Iomega. Although it is taking much longer than he said, Ralph Nader said years ago that in 20 years most of the business in the US will be controlled by 20 or so large corporations, and it looks like that prediction is gradually taking place. Small startups that have a unique product are quickly scooped up by the big guys who also buy their competition to close it down. That's certainly a good way for a smart programmer to become a millionaire; just come up with a great idea that works. As for

being bought up, foreign countries will soon own the US by repossessing us if we keep borrowing money from them.

The items below are announcements I received, but I have necessarily edited the wording. I have not tried any of the products.

### Free Tutoring for the Uninformed

Output I/S has launched **HTML.net**, a free HTML and CSS tutorial site that makes it easy to learn how to design and develop web sites. In about an hour, novice computer users can learn the essential information needed to build a website using nothing more than an ordinary text editor. The Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) tutorial begins with the basics and introduces you to links, images and tables. You'll learn how to develop a site that can be viewed by all web browsers on all



platforms. There are tips and tricks to make your web site attractive, fast loading, and effective.

The Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) tutorial teaches you to separate your web site content from your design, enabling you to quickly change the look and feel of your web site. CSS-based websites improve your search engine rankings by making it easier for search engines to find and index your content. CSS is slowly replacing table-based HTML as the design tool of choice. The HTML.net

## Help Still Needed and Upcoming Meetings

As was announced previously, Andrew Rein has stepped down from his job as Program Director. So CMUG is in need of someone who can coordinate presentations for our general meetings.

The presentations are an important part of the educational mission of our user group. The Program Director acts as a central coordinator, and as liaison between the group and the speaker. So, this is an important job. On the other hand, it's not especially time consuming; we only have 11 presentations a year, after all, and most of the communication can be done via email. If you have questions about the workload or are otherwise interested, you might speak with Andrew (or one of the other officers) at the meeting.

**June 18:** Elections; speaker will be Dave Whittle, who will speak on some of the useful software and hardware he's discovered over the years, and will have some of it to sell at discounted prices.

**July 16:** To be determined.

**August 20:** To be determined.

## Windows SIG May 27 Meeting

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except in December. The SIG focuses on using and maintaining Windows, all platforms. We take questions, present tips and techniques, demonstrate freeware/shareware and even feature some web topics using a little trickery.

The last I heard from Mike Hayes, he didn't have a topic planned, and suggested I just say "Another Informative Windows Topic." Check the CMUG website for the latest info. If you have a suggestion for a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email Mike at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com).

Remember that the meetings are at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org) for maps and directions.



tutorials are available 24/7, without charge. Tutorials are in English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese, and more.

For more information, visit [www.html.net](http://www.html.net), or contact Output I/S, Kaj Munks Vej 10, 3.th, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark. Phone: (+45) 5194 5001. Email: [info@output.dk](mailto:info@output.dk).

### Free Screensaver

DealsGuy note: I am always suspicious of screensavers and I don't use them myself, but my proofreader found some decent reviews of the companion game from the same author, so this screensaver is probably OK.

A sweet and adorable fairy soars across a beautiful fantasy landscape. Along the way, she uses dazzling spells to defend herself against evil goblins and blazing firebirds. This delightful visual feast is the free Feyruna Fairy Forest screensaver from Jochen Kaercher Gamedesign, creator of premium games for casual players.

Fairy Forest screensaver includes the option to turn on atmospheric music and sound effects. As viewers listen to the soothing audio, they're treated to smoothly animated scenes featuring the otherworldly artwork of Feyruna Fairy Forest, a casual game created by Jochen Kaercher Gamedesign. Visit [www.feyruna.com](http://www.feyruna.com) to download the 13 MB installation file and begin enjoying the free Feyruna Fairy Forest screensaver. Windows 95 or later is required.

Jochen Kaercher is an experienced game developer based in Germany. After launching his company in 1999, he created several freeware and shareware offerings for the PC. Kaercher is now developing more ambitious titles aimed at casual gamers. All offerings can be downloaded from [www.jochenkaercher.com](http://www.jochenkaercher.com).

### Free USB Protection

A.C. Element Company has made available the free version of MyUSBOnly for individual users. MyUSBOnly Free 2007 is a Windows security application that prevents data theft through your computer's USB ports. While USB ports have made computing much more convenient, they also introduce a security threat that could subject many computer users to identity theft and data theft. MyUSBOnly thwarts attempts to gain access to your computer via your USB ports.

New features for MyUSBOnly Free 2007 are:

- ↳ Syslog entries for copied, modified, deleted files/folders
- ↳ Firewall-like feature to allow/deny inserted USB

devices

It acts as something similar to a firewall that monitors the USB ports for any storage device connected to the protected computer. Simply create a whitelist of all of the USB devices you want to allow on your computer. The program will recognize each of your flash drives, external disk drives, MP3 players, and other USB devices and add them to its list of accepted hardware once you authorize them. When your list is complete, the software will then check the whitelist of allowed devices by USB brand (if you want to allow a certain USB brand) or by serial number (for specific USB devices you want to allow) depending on the settings desired by the user.

The software also has reporting features, such as email notifications, each time somebody attaches a USB device to your desktop or laptop. MyUSBOnly also maintains a security log of all attempts to gain access to your computer via USB flash drives, iPods, card-readers, or any USB hardware. Modified and copied files are now included in the



log entries and can be configured to send all log information to syslog. Use syslog viewers such as Kiwi Syslog Daemon TM to view all the log entries from one or more computers in the network, allowing administrators to be able to manage and audit security.

There is an option to hide the software from the user, by not displaying any tray icons at all, so it silently works in the background without the user even knowing it's there. MyUSBOnly makes it easy to lock down your USB ports to protect this critical vulnerability on your desktop or laptop.

MyUSBOnly runs under Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista/Server 2008, Download the software from our website [www.myusbonly.com/usb/free.php](http://www.myusbonly.com/usb/free.php). DealsGuy note: My proofreader noted some contradictions in the website information so look closely and clarify what you don't understand by trying the trial version before buying.

### Like Jigsaw Puzzles? Try This One!

They claim, "It is even possible to see and feel the cardboard thickness", but I am skeptical about feeling the cardboard thickness on the screen."

Gaia Dream Creation Inc. released its new 3D jigsaw puzzle game, and a puzzle screensaver named "Gaia 3D Puzzle" and "Gaia





3D Puzzle Screensaver." This 3D jigsaw puzzle game allows players to play jigsaw puzzles on their computer by selecting their favorite images and the number of pieces. The 3D view creates a totally immersive playing experience like a real puzzle game.

Gaia 3D Puzzle allows players to play with almost any images found on the Internet. Unlike other computer puzzle games, Gaia 3D Puzzle is in 3D. Players can see their puzzle as a real jigsaw puzzle and the pieces are as real as true jigsaw pieces. The pieces are not pre-cut image shapes. They are generated from advanced mathematic procedures to show the exact look and feel of true jigsaw pieces. It is even possible to see and feel the cardboard thickness. Players are able to play puzzles from 9 to 2000 pieces. Children can play and enjoy the same puzzles that adults play, but with fewer pieces.

A selection of 4 different piece shapes is available which increases or decreases the difficulty level. It's also possible to modify the degree of distortion in the pieces, meaning the pieces can all look the same, which is harder to play, or all look different, which is easier to play.

The puzzle game and screensaver are available in English and French for Windows 2000/XP/Vista. The puzzle game (Gaia 3D Puzzle) is \$29.95 and the screensaver (Gaia 3D Puzzle Screensaver) is \$14.95. 20% is offered to DealsGuy readers with coupon code GAIA-XAKB-USA. This code is valid until June 30, 2008. You must download the trial version to make sure it works well on your system and that you are satisfied, then follow the URL in the product to pay using the discount code.

Website:

[www.gaiadreamcreation.com/games/gaia-3d-puzzle/](http://www.gaiadreamcreation.com/games/gaia-3d-puzzle/)

Screensaver:

[www.gaiadreamcreation.com/screensavers/gaia-3d-puzzle-screensaver/](http://www.gaiadreamcreation.com/screensavers/gaia-3d-puzzle-screensaver/)

### That's All for This Month

I'll soon have some new product announcements on my website ([www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com)). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

- Bob (The Cheapskate) Click  
bobclick at bellsouth dot net



## The Big DTV Transition

by Sister Dorothy Robinson, via APCUG

Computer users often speculate about how digital technology will affect us and our world. We are now entering the final stage of a rather large digital transition, that of digital television signals. Didn't know this transition was going on? You're not alone.

On February 16, The Olympian [*Ed. note: newspaper in Olympia, Washington*] ran an Associated Press article on the digital television transition that is happening in the United States. The article said that in about a year, on February 17, 2009, all analog TV broadcasts will end in this country. If a TV does not have a digital tuner, or is not connected to cable or satellite or other paid services, it will need a digital converter box to receive and display digital signals. About 13 million households would be affected—those with older TVs (no digital tuner) or receiving signals only over the air as in the past. This is because analog tuners can't decode and display digital signals.

Options, said The Olympian, for continuing to receive TV signals after February 17, 2009 are to buy a digital converter box (\$40-50, according to this AP article), a new TV with a digital tuner, or get connected to a paid service. The federal government is offering \$40 coupons, up to two per household, good on the purchase of a converter box. You can now call 1-888-388-2009 or apply online at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov). There is also an option online to print out an application and mail it in. You may want to apply early.

Channel 9 in Syracuse NY ([www.9wsyr.com](http://www.9wsyr.com)) says "You will still need an over-the-air antenna in addition to the converter box to receive a digital signal on your analog television set. Your current antenna should work the same as before. Many major chains have been certified to sell the converter boxes, including Best Buy, Circuit City, Kmart, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Sears, Radio Shack and Target."

Best Buy, according to [centredaily.com](http://centredaily.com) (State College, PA), "will stock an Insignia-branded analog-to-digital converter box exclusively, retailing at \$59.99." PRNewswire.com states "Converter boxes at \$49.97 are on shelves now at Wal-Mart already." According to [radioshack.com](http://radioshack.com), you can find a Zenith converter in stores for \$59.99. It is looking like the difference between the price of the converter box and the coupon will be \$10 and up.

The Olympian article said the reasons for the changeover are to allow for auctioning off excess airwaves (digital broadcasting is much more efficient so there will be an excess), for new wireless services, and "possibly" providing emergency air networks for disasters. Digital signals can also provide better picture definition—but that depends on whether high definition programs are being broadcast and on whether a TV is set up to receive high definition programs. Digital signals





can support high-definition (HDTV) broadcasts—but is *not the same as* HDTV.

From How Stuff Works (<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/hdtv1.htm>) comes this information: “Some people believe that the United States is switching to HDTV—that all they'll need for HDTV is a new TV and that they'll automatically have HDTV when analog service ends. Unfortunately, none of this is true.” If you want more information on how HDTV works, check this site at the link above.

The government website at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) has this to say about the reasons for the changeover: “Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders.” It says nothing about auctioning off airwave spectrum or the intricacies of HDTV.

The Benton Foundation page at [www.benton.org/index.php?q=node/1257](http://www.benton.org/index.php?q=node/1257) has information on the background and time-line for DTV transition. It states:

“Digital television (DTV) is a new, more efficient technology for transmitting and receiving broadcast television signals. But DTV signals are not compatible with today's analog TV sets in most American homes. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the amount of spectrum given to television station owners was doubled. The policy rationale for this was to enable the stations to transition US consumers to digital TV without interruption of analog broadcasts. But after ten years of digital TV broadcasts, only a small number of US households have made the switch to DTV, delaying the return of valuable spectrum that could be used by emergency officials and auctioned to offset federal deficit spending.”

Included in benton.org's time-line called “Getting to February 2009: Implementing the Digital TV Transition,” is this step:

“January 28, 2008 The FCC must conduct the auction of the licenses for recovered analog spectrum, commencing the bidding no later than this date, and is to deposit the proceeds of the auction in the US Treasury no later than June 30, 2008.”

In other words, this is happening right now, if things are proceeding on schedule.

Here's CNN.com's take on this topic in January of 2006: ([http:// money.cnn.com/ 2006/01/](http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/)

[04/ technology/ pluggedin\\_digitaltv/ index.htm](http://04/technology/pluggedin_digitaltv/index.htm)):

“Once TV stations switch to digital transmission, they will return to the government a big chunk of the radio spectrum they currently use to transmit their analog channels. Some of that spectrum will go to first responders—police, fire and public safety officials—so they can better communicate with one another. Breakdowns in emergency communication slowed the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. New spectrum should help.

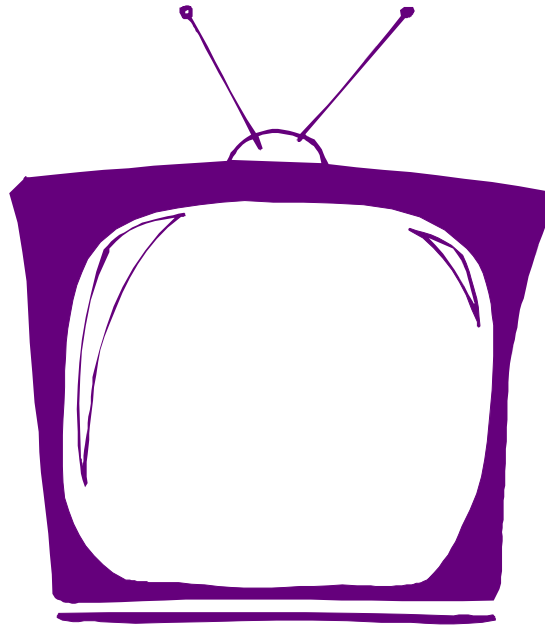
The rest of the spectrum will be auctioned off to the highest bidders—probably tech companies. The sale of this valuable, scarce real estate is expected to bring in about \$10 billion, maybe more. That will help reduce the federal budget deficit.”

CNN also talked about the new technology and services that will likely be developed using this increased air availability, for example, cheap wireless broadband access virtually everywhere. Referring to an historical parallel, it states:

“Scheduled for 2008, the auction will be the biggest spectrum sale since a 1994-95 spectrum auction. That sale helped boost the mobile phone industry, boosting the number of cell phone subscribers in the U.S. from 24 million to 200 million. It also helped drive down the cost of wireless minutes from an average of 47 cents a minute to 9 cents a minute, according to analysis from financial services firm Stifel Nicolaus.”

Whether we like it or not, the DTV revolution is on its way. The best we can do is prepare ourselves. For many of us, the \$10 or \$20 needed to buy a converter box is not a problem. Unfortunately, some people on fixed or low incomes will find it very difficult to get ready for the change. For them, the TV screen may go dark at midnight on February 17, 2009.

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Sister Dorothy Robinson, OSB, is the newsletter editor for OMUG, the Olympia Microcomputer User Group in Washington state ([www.oly mug.org](http://www.oly mug.org)). She can be reached by email at [newsletter at oly mug dot org](mailto:newsletter@oly mug dot org).*



# Moving on to Vista

by Neil Stahfest, via APCUG

## Reduce Eyestrain with Bigger Fonts

It's easy to lose track of time when you're playing computer games or cruising the Internet. As our computers have improved we tend to use higher screen resolutions to see more detail and, unfortunately, that can cause eye strain, especially with prolonged use. The solution is not to reduce screen resolution but to increase the size of the text.

Windows Vista offers an easy way to do this. Click on "Start", then "Control Panel" and then type "adjust font size" in the search box in the upper right corner. A menu choice "Personalization" will appear and right under it you will see "Adjust font size (DPI)". Click on it and a window called "DPI scaling" will appear. You'll see three choices: "Default scale (96 DPI), Larger scale (120 DPI), and a button that says "Customize".

The first two choices are pretty clear. In the third choice, if you click "Customize DPI", the "Custom DPI Setting" window will open. Just follow the instruction to increase or decrease the DPI setting to find the setting that works best for you.

## Searching in Vista

One question new Vista users ask me is "What happened to the search command?" People who have used Windows XP and previous versions of Windows are used to clicking on the "Start" button and then clicking on the "Search" label on the right side of the menu.

Search is still available but Microsoft apparently thought it was more intuitive for us to press the "Windows" key plus the "F" key (think "Windows find" to remember this). Look at the upper right corner of the window that opens for the "Search Box" and enter the word or phrase that you are looking for. Notice in the line below you have a number of options to limit your search to "All", "E-mail", "Document", "Picture", "Music", and "Other". There is also an "Advanced" selection that allows you to select a range of file dates, locations, names and authors. To close the Search Window you have to click on the red "X" in the top right corner.

You might also notice that when you click on "Computer" (used to be "My Computer"), a search box appears in the top right corner of the window. This feature is universal and appears whenever you open any folder window. It also appears when you click on the "Start" button (the "search line" appears in the menu directly above the Start button).

## Windows Lock

While I'm on the subject of the "Windows" key, the combination of "Windows key plus the "L" key locks your keyboard. Everything you are working on becomes



hidden by the login screen and you need to enter your password to continue to use your computer. This feature may be convenient even if you're not trying to hide your work from anyone. My son's cat seems to be fascinated by computer screens and anything blinking or moving on the screen. She frequently jumps up on the desk next to an unattended computer and walks across the keyboard to touch the screen with a paw or her nose. It's cute but sometimes I return to find a program has been suspended or the computer placed in "sleep" mode. For me, "Windows Lock" is protection from pets.

Do you use the Vista Sidebar? Some people love it, some don't. There have been complaints of people using the Notes Gadget to store web addresses and they've lost them. Other people have set up their home city in the Weather Gadget only to discover that the program reverts back to Redmond Washington. Gadgets are individual programs that store their own preference files on your hard drive. Anytime you close a gadget, you lose all the data that you typed into it: addresses, locations, etc. So, .. either find a better place to store your information or don't click on a gadget's "X" button unless you really want to cease using the gadget.

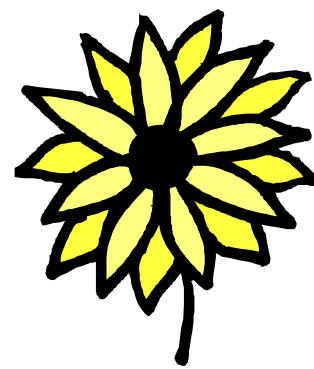
Windows Vista has been out for a year now and there are rumors that Microsoft will release the long-awaited Service Pack 1 for downloading in March. If they do, I'm sure we'll see enough changes in Vista for another newsletter article.

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Neil Stahfest is the librarian at the Tacoma Area PC User Group in Washington state ([www.tapcug.org](http://www.tapcug.org)). He can be reached by email at [ncstahfest@msn.com](mailto:ncstahfest@msn.com).*



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
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Meeting:

**Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 pm**

Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County  
Library will speak about the library's use of  
open source software

## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

### Membership and Change of Address

Send renewals and address changes to:

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CMUG Membership  
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Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),  
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General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$30 (cheap!). Membership includes a monthly subscription to the CMUG Megaphone, occasional drawings for free and review software at meetings, and the sure and certain knowledge that you are helping to keep CMUG up and running.

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