Computer Club of Menifee Valley (CCMV)
"Friends Helping Friends"
apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups
June 2007 Volume 12, No. 6

"Changing of the Watch"

With this issue of the CCMV Newsletter, the Editor's helm is taken over by me, Frank Varano. All you contributors should send your material to me. Be aware That there will be some editing to make, things fit and to look for bloopers in grammar, syntax and spelling.

Frank Porter, your leaving editor has done a noble job over the past few years. Let's salute him. He now has a bigger job — the chief cook and bottle washer in his own home while caring for his better half, Josephine.

The format of the newsletter will change over time for efficiency purposes. I like to throw in clip art here and there to liven up your reading.

I invite you to write. You don't have to be a pro. For my other job as editor of The Connection people hand me scraps of paper and tell me to write around those notes.

Be sure to give me enough to write on. I am not a mind reader. Just a good note reader. But write clearly and legibly. Use English!

Gee, I Didn't Know That

By Frank Varano

Remember those flat, black platters that we inserted into a rotating disk? Then like magic, music came out. The outside tracks of the platters moved faster than the inside tracks. So how come the music didn't get higher pitched toward the end of the disk?

Well, there is an explanation for it but I am not going to tell you. I needed to start this article with that kind of disk to talk about the computer hard disks. A writer in ZDNet tells his readers that hard disks get slower with use. His explanation is a little flimsy but who am I to argue with experts. I'll get to it in a moment. His topic of slowing down of disks led me to think of partitions on hard disks. And I'll get to that too in a moment.

The writer had a technique for compensating for the slowing down of hard disks. He said that you should wipe clean the disk then put the OS on first so that it goes on the outside sectors where the disk is moving faster. That means loading is faster. Then put on the big things like Office programs. And put the smallest stuff on last where they are using the slower part of the hard disk.

I think I am naïve. What difference does it make? Doesn't defragging rearrange things all the time? My suggestion for his perceived problem is to make a partition at the front of the drive (the fastest part) and put the OS there. Make another partition next to it for the behemoths like the Office Suite. Then make a partition for the other stuff. I think that the OS will stay put and the Office Suite will stay put in their respective partitions. I question if those first two partitions need any but occasional defragging perhaps because they get updates once in a while.

The writer's main argument is that there are more sectors in the faster (outer rim) of the disk. He had a nice argument for that but it will not help you at this stage. If you did absolutely nothing about the problem the difference in access times is not going to upset the apple cart. You will not notice it. I always practice on the guitar while MS Word loads up so there is a side benefit.

I bought a 160 Gig Maxtor hard drive which I now Know what to do about it. It will be bootable and

Continued on page 2

Thank You, Gary Skills!

By Frank Varano

That was a good article in the April issue about using the Bcc: box to send emails. I've been on a crusade to spread the word. Every time I get an email with hordes of email addresses exposed I send a message to the sender telling him about the exposure of all those addresses. I do this through 'my *Internet Crusade Foundation.*' The trouble is that if you send your message to an Earthlink address (and some other addresses), it doesn't go through. You get a return message like 'you gotta have my permission to talk to me.' There are other block walls too. It seems like a hopeless venture. I do this through 'my *Bcc: Department.'*

The next time I try that I will forward it to the original sender along with all the forwards and demonstrate to the sender-offender how the original message exposed so many people to spammers. I'll do that through 'my *Forwards Research Department.'*

I think I will also write about my other crusade against people who think that because a message arrived by the net it must be true. I am talking about all those urban legends sob stories and hoaxes. I do that through 'my *Debunking Department.'*

With that new pacemaker, I am gung ho!

Gee, (Continued from page 1)

make a special partition for My Documents based on the flimsy information in his article.

I suggest that you do not tinker with your hard drive like the author recommends. It may lead you to hard drive grief. Just take up the guitar. I'll give you your first lesson.

How Does Encryption Work?

By Frank Varano

On the Internet, there are two main uses for encryption. One occurs when you visit a "secure" Website, such as an online store or shopping mall. This is called server-side encryption because it uses the Server Certificate given to the server (computer) that runs the Website. The other use occurs when you send or receive encrypted e-mail. In both cases, the encryption process involves exchanging public keys.

When encrypting information, the encryption process is done with either a public or a private key and then decrypted with the matching public or private key. Think of it as a llock that requires *one key to close the lock and another key to open the lock.*

For example, when you visit a secure Website, your computer receives the Website's public key. When your computer sends information to the Website, your computer encrypts it using the Website's public key. The only way to decrypt the information you are sending is with the web site's private key.

Encryption matters are not simple at all. I picked this up on the Internet. I think the explanation given above is pretty good but I always like to use analogies to explain things. Here is my analogy. Let's say that you want to send me an article for the Newsletter but you want to encrypt it (imagine that). So I send you a file (public key) to 'merge' with your article as you send it to me. Nobody knows what you are sending because it is now mixed up with another file I sent you.

Now when I get it I take my own file (which is known only to me, private key) 'merge' with the file you sent me and then your message comes out. I use the word 'merge' here loosely. There are details here which make my analogy a little screwy. It is good enough to get a feel for encryption.

If you still don't know what I am talking about then don't feel bad about it, after all, keep in mind that the sharpest minds in industry worked on this.

What Do You Do?

By Frank Varano

"I leave my computer on all the time." "I turn it off every night." "I turn it off when I am not using it."

We all have out own thoughts on the subject. But there is a reason for turning it off, at least occasionally.

When programmers write code in C++ (the usual language for windows, in the course of writing the code, the programmer has indicate how much memory parts of the program needs. If he doesn't release the memory the RAM gets jammed up.

Here is an analogy (I sure love to use analogies.) Imagine that you are a chairman of a committee and you need to reserve 10 rooms in a building for your group.

So you have the meetings and leave. But you don't tell the building manager that you don't need the rooms any more so that others can use them. He is still reserving the rooms and nobody else can use them.

And if he doesn't have any more rooms available for others he's got a big problem.

And so it is with RAM. A poorly written program does not always release the allocated RAM. Therefore, shut the darnn thing off once in a while.

Flat Panel Monitor Information.

By Andy Johnson of The Club

Question*: Do you have the right video cable?*

New Flat panel monitors usually have provisions for two inputs, VGA Analog and DVI™ (Digital Visual Interface). What kind of cable to your monitor are you using? How can you tell?

If your new FP display has two jacks for video connection then one of them will be the Digital Visual Interface and the plug at the end of the cable will be square. The VGA Analog connector will look like the old parallel port printer cable but much smaller. It is something to keep in mind if you are buying a used FP display also. But as I said at the beginning the *new* FP monitors may have two jacks.

If you are ;using a VGA cable for your flat panel monitor you may not be viewing the best possible picture that would be available using a DVI cable. Now for a word of explanation.

The computer generates all pictures as digital images. The video board *may* have both analog and digital outputs. When the VGA cable is plugged into the analog connector on the video card the display has to convert the signal back to digital at the monitor. Consequently you are viewing an image of less detail because of the double conversion.

The DVI cable, however plugs into the digital connector on the Video Card.. DVI allows the flat panel display to be connected to a digital interface thus eliminating the digital-to-analog-to-digital conversion.

The DVI is a means of transmission of high resolution video signals with excellent EMI/RFI shielding. DVI provides a handshake or path for the source to communicate with the display to automatically set the output to the highest resolution capability of the display.

With a dual link DVI cable a resolution of 2048 x 1536 is possible, and a single link cable will go up to 1920 x 1080 resolution.

Your Computer is Stupid.

by Frank Varano

You'd think (rightfully so) that when you add a storage device to your computer, you know, like a flash drive or something that the computer would assign a letter to it. But sometimes the device doesn't show up or even worse, a device shows up and you did not install it at all. That is frustrating. Whether or not a device shows up is often attributable to some error in running your computer.

Today the most common problem is with the removable drive. Thumb drives or USB drives are very common and popular but you have to pay attention to how you use them. Many people don't know that there are correct ways to remove them but there is also a wrong way to remove them.

Microsoft ways says that there are two correct ways to remove them. Microsoft specifically refers to them as external or "hot-swappable disks (or other devices)." There is a Safely Remove Hardware icon in the taskbar notification area. You must use it. If the icon is not there then you must use Device Manager to uninstall the disk before you unplug it.

What about the improper was to uninstall it? Well, what do you know? It is the method is the one almost all of us use: We simply unplug the device. I do too but I make sure that it is not actively being written to or read from. You simply unplug the device, hear the audible 'ding-dong,' and that's OK. .

Continued on page 4

COMPUTER CLUB of Menifee Valley

Department Leaders

Membership
Dee Morris
MEMBERSHIP@ccmv.net

Material Distribution
Dorothy & George Metcalf
GWDJM@Verizon.net

Shareware Distribution
Position Open
Need Volunteer

Newsletter Editor
Frank Varano
EDITOR@ccmv.net or
tmradius@verizon.net

Newsletter Reporters & Articles
E-mail your articles, comments and suggestions to:
EDITOR@ccmv.net

Computer Lab Technicians
Jim Richardson

Web Site
Jim Semanek
WEBGUY@ccmv.net

Computer Instruction

Dean of Computer School
Joannie Lenz
joannie@RainbowFlair.com

Registrar
Carol Taggart
REGISTRAR@ccnv.net

Teachers & Assistants
Various CCMV Members

Sign Up for a Class TODAY!
at
Computer Club meeting
or the
Kay Ceniceros Center

Computer Club Class Room Located at

Cherry Hills Country Club
At the West End of
Cherry Hills Blvd

Your Computer is Stupid

Continued from Page 4

This is fine when your flash drive (for example) is plugged in the USB in the front of the computer. But old computers may have the USB only in the back. And you can see the flashing light indicating that it is reading or writing.

Microsoft says you MUST use the Safely Remove Hardware method. Why? Because you can lose data and you can run the risk of screwing up that assigned 'letter' that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. The OS may just leave that letter assigned and not remove it. Like a phantom.

It is a matter of courtesy to the computer. (I am anthropomorphizing your computer. Go ahead, look it up. You'll fee guilty too knowing that you've done it often before. Besides, I need at least one big word here)

Now if you already have a bunch of letters and there is nothing new installed, you have another problem. That would be a nice topic to write about but I don't know enough about it yet.

****

Maybe You Can Help Me

By Frank Varano

I got a problem. I have a second computer in the Master Bedroom. You see, I sleep walk and I need something to do when I am sleepwalking. Hence, the second Computer. Verizon put in FIOS in my house and I have a beautiful router next to my main computer in the computer room. The second computer has a wireless adapter and that is where my problem lies.

The CD that came with the wireless adapter installed nicely. Everything seems OK. Signal strength is "excellent' but it will not talk to the outside world. I had the Verizon tech people working with me on the phone on two occasions and each time it was a matter of a 2 to 3 hours session, at the end of which he gave up.

The software display on the screen shows that the adapter talks with the router like it should with good signal strength. But it shows that it is not talking with the Internet. Of course. In the Run dialog box, pinging the router is OK, pinging Verizon web site is OK. I put the adapter in my main computer where it is about 2 feet from the router and everything works fine when I disconnect the Ethernet cable.

I should mention that I get a warning that the device is connected to a slow speed USB port. Now

Continued in next column

all you gurus out there, would this make any difference in the behavior? What *is* the trouble?

****

MONTHLY INCOME & EXPENSES

FROM 5/1/07 to 5/31/07

By Chet Hartley

Income	
Contributions	$86.95
Interest	$2.26
Shareware/Freeware Sales	$50.00
Textbook Sale	$25.00
Tuition	$0.00
Total Income	**$164.00**
Expenses	
Church Usage	$200.00
Newsletter Usages	$11.96.
Total Expenses	$211.96
Income Less Expenses	($41.75)

What Can You Do?

By Frank Varano

It would be nice if there were contributions from others in the club. I get embarrassed that my name is splattered all over our newsletter. At my age I don't know what vanity is any more. .

If you can't write a 'full blown' article you can give me a bunch of notes of what you want to say. Give me your references, if any and tell me where I can get them. I have enough material to for 10 issues.

I would like to see that what we write here is of interest and valued to most of us. Please do write your topics in MS Word, either 97 or 2000 or 2003 or 2007. My email address will be elsewhere in these issues. Use the word 'Newsletter' as a subject so that I can spot it easily. I may have up to 300 emails in my Inbox at one time.