



OMUG

<http://www.oly mug.org>

NEWS



Vol. 12, No. 7

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

July 2004

We're not all experts, but we're helpful

By **Bill Gortz**
OMUG President

While trying to think about something to write about for the President's Post, I saw on my desk a health newsletter with a headline of "When do you need a specialist?" This got me to thinking that health matters are not the only issues where you need a specialist and computers can very easily fall into this category.

Although there are very few "board certified specialists" in OMUG, there is usually someone you can turn to when your computer gets "sick" or you just need some help getting it started, or you need assistance when learning how to get it to do something.

The best way to find our "specialists" is to come to the various meetings OMUG has; one of the better ones is the Meet and Mix hour before the general meeting the second Thursday of each month.

Other meetings would be our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) such as the



Beginners, Windows, Internet, Lunch Bunch, and other SIGs. Meeting times and locations are shown on Pages six and seven of the newsletter and on the Calendar of Events that comes as an insert to the newsletter and on our website.

Some people have the idea that the SIG meetings are similar to a formal classroom setting. This is not the case and the SIG meetings are usually very informal. Although the SIG Leader will usually have a certain topic he or she is prepared to discuss, quite often someone will have a specific problem or a question and the time is spent helping solve the problem or answering the question, and the leader never gets a chance to talk about the topic he or she had in mind.

For those of you who are just starting to use a computer please remember one

thing – when you go to one of our meetings and walk into this room full of "experts," do not be intimidated. Most of us are not experts, we are just people who use computers for various reasons and have learned a little along the way.

A second thing to remember is that at one time we were all beginners and have likely had the same problems and have made the same mistakes that you are facing now and most of us are willing to help you as much as our knowledge and abilities will let us. If we don't know the answer to your question, we can usually refer you to someone who might.

If all else fails and you have to take your computer into a shop to get it repaired or upgraded, you can go to our website and find vendors that will give discounts for their service, see: <http://www.oly mug.org/discount.htm>.

We do not fall into the same class as the specialists mentioned in my health newsletter, but OMUG as a group is willing to try its best to help whenever we can, and our prices are a lot better. As the saying goes "and free is a very good price."

Don't be a victim of health scare stories

By **Alicia King Padgett**
APCUG Advisor for Region 9

Health scare artists are utilizing the Internet as a medium for terrorizing the public, and unfortunately many adults are taking the stories seriously. These tall tales are often written citing evidence and research that sounds legitimate. Frequently an e-mail is sent to you from a reliable friend who had received it from another acquaintance who

had "personal knowledge or personal experience" with the alleged dangerous item. The health scare messages are always the same—whatever it is will make you sick or even cause death.

If you try to research accurate health information about the topic sent, you may literally become caught in the Web, where health hoaxes and urban medical myths run rampant.

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KEY MEMBERS

APCUG Representative: Linda Mae

Budget Committee Chair: Bill Gortz

Database Manager: Max Whipps

Elections Chair: David A.C. Shephard

Historian: David Belles

Membership Chair: James Gunnells

Membership Renewal Coordinator:
Max Whipps

Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:
Loren Freeman

Nominating Committee Chair: Vacant

Scholarship Committee Chair:
Bob Wing

SIG Coordinator: Shirley Bellinghausen

Visitors Coordinator: Elizabeth Ross
**SIG Leader names are listed with
their SIG descriptions**

The Olympia Microcomputer Users
Group is a not for profit organization
dedicated to helping computer users
improve their skills with computers.

OMUG News
Vol. 12, No. 7
July 2004
Published
monthly

PMB 225
3430 Pacific Ave
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98501-2177

Opportunity to review software available to all

OMUG is again being asked to
review software for vendors
promoting many new
developers. It could be YOU.

We have two new program from
Stomp: "Backup My PC" and
"Spyware Terminator" to be given out
at the July general meeting.

Reviewers will need to install the
program, use it, and write an honest
opinion of the program. Give a short oral
review at the following general meeting
and prepare a written review for the
newsletter.

You will be given guide rules to follow
and in some cases there will be a 60 to
90 day time limit.

The best part is that if you are chosen
to review and you like the program YOU
can keep it. If more than two people
would like to try these programs we will
draw names to select reviewers.

If you are interested, send an e-mail
to Shirley Bellinghausen at
vicepresident@olymug.org, or sign up
at the name tag table when you arrive
at the general meeting.

Welcome to our New Members

**KATHY & ROBERT LEE
NURI BURVILLE &
BRIAN CASTIGLIONE
MARGARET NEVILLS**

Thanks For Renewing

**Ann & Maxwell Berry
Ted Chenery &
Sylvia Linton
(England)**

Jim & Diana Hanson

**Ernie & Monika
Liebenow**

Tom Johnson

Bruce Welsh

Nicholas Kirkmire

Jack Zorn

Sharron Hamilton

Marcelene Darling

Juanita & Lyle Hart

**Paul, Autumn, Meridan,
& Grey Pickett**

Bob Elves

Daniel & Gloria

Alexander

Ann Mataczynski

Kay & John Sanders

Leslie Kreger

Eugene Sabotta

William Cosgrove

Wallace Music

Future of OMUG library up for discussion

By Vivian Forrester
OMUG Secretary



President Bill Gortz opened the meeting June 17 at 7:05 p.m., in the Computer Room of the Senior Center in the Olympia Center. Other board members present were Shirley Bellinghausen, vice-president; Vivian Forrester, secretary; Max Whipps, treasurer; Christie McCormick, librarian; James Gunnells, director at large and Floyd Kloepfer, representing John Marshall, director at large; Sandy Pishner, newsletter editor; and Pat Sonnenstuhl, webmaster.

Minutes of the May 21 meeting were accepted as presented. Max reported a total income for the month of \$184.04, expenses of \$203.69, for a net deficit of \$19.65. The account balance of \$4,790.43 on May 20, plus \$200 to be deposited, brings the treasury total to \$4,990.43.

OTHER BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Programs: The program for the July general meeting is confirmed. Brian Higgins will present a computer program that can be used in fixing your car. Shirley has programs confirmed for the remainder of the year, but dates not settled.

Newsletter: Members are beginning to submit items for publication, but when they are from other sources, Sandy needs to have all source information to comply with copyright laws.

Librarian: Books are on the shelf in the Computer Room with checkouts on an honor system. There have been no checkouts for the past six months. Continuing the evaluation of the need for the position, the Librarian will write an article for the Newsletter and the Board will wait for membership response. It appears, due to the greater accessibility of information, perhaps the service has outlived its usefulness.

Frankenstein: Floyd reported four to five refurbished computers have been given to qualified recipients in the past

month. The project has three to four people on the waiting list and OMUG has several computers and printers to be restored. The project can also use printer ink cartridges, except Epson.

Software Review: Shirley has received two items to be reviewed. The Board discussed rules to be followed by reviewer, approving and adding to the list presented by Bill. Bill will continue work on the guidelines and present them at the July Board Meeting. Bill and Shirley will manage the Software Reviews.

Membership: James is working on website forms and will send it to Board Members for review before setting it up.

SIGS: The Hardware SIG has been discontinued due to the resignation of Brian Claeys, who no longer has the time since starting his own business. It will be restarted when a new leader is available.

The Board reviewed committee appointments and evaluated where additional appointments are needed. James will recruit members to help with his committee. The Board unanimously approved the appointment of Gary Bigger as Special Activities Chairman.

Sandy will attempt to sign OMUG up for Rest Area volunteering during a weekend in July 2006. The DOT office is in Tacoma near where she works. The Board reviewed information from past serving and location of supplies.

Letter to the Editor

If you are not making the general meetings you are missing out on a lot of interesting information of what is going on in the ever-changing Computer World. It is impossible to update, change or buy the products we learn about but every bit of knowledge helps us feel more comfortable with our own computers and be prepared when we do want to make changes.

Bill Marin, who has a store in Tenino, showed us the neatest small computers that are new on the market. A 10"by 7" case that contains everything you could want in a PC. They come in colors, some have lighted fronts; your current hardware plugs right in. You missed a good presentation! Guess you will have to go to Tenino now and see for yourself.

Shirley B.

OMUG Income & Expenses May 2004



Income: \$184.04

[Mbr Dues-\$180.00, Interest-\$2.84, Misc. Donation-\$1.20]

Expenses: \$203.69

[Newsletter Copying-158.54, SSSS Donation-\$25.00,
Public Relations Committee Supplies-\$20.15]

Net Deficit: (\$19.65)

Account Balance: \$4785.01

6/25/04

To Be Deposited: \$280.00

Current Treasury: \$5065.01 (Incl. Scholarship Fund)

Spams, pop-ups and cookies, oh my!

By Sherry Zorzi
Cajun Clickers Computer Club
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The Internet is full of creepy-crawly beasties. Spam, pop-ups, hoaxes, cookies, spyware — what are these critters and how do I tame them???

Spam – unsolicited, usually commercial, e-mail also known as UCE. You can't stop it; the best you can do is try to limit it.

Don't post your address on publicly-accessible websites (newsgroups, chat rooms, directories). Web "crawlers" harvest these addresses for spammers' mailing lists. You can obtain free, "throwaway" e-mail addresses at sites like Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) or Hotmail (www.hotmail.com) to use in these situations.



When you register for a legitimate website (Microsoft, Amazon, Delta Airlines, etc.), opt-out of any newsletters or mailings they offer to send you. If opting out is not offered, don't register for the site unless you want advertising e-mail!

Use "filters" in your e-mail program to automatically route suspected spam to a special folder, which you can check periodically and delete. Or use special (free!) software, like MailWasher (www.mailwasher.net) or K9 Spam Killer (www.keir.net/k9.html) to automatically check incoming mail and handle suspected spam for you.

Don't ever follow directions to "unsubscribe" or stop receiving mail, unless you know you are dealing with a reputable source. Replying to the message or clicking a link to supposedly unsubscribe is often just a ruse by the spammer to verify your e-mail address

is valid and you are naive enough to open spam. You will get more, not less, spam!

UseSpamCop (www.spamcop.net) to report spam. The service is free. They will automatically report, in your name, the true source of the spam to the appropriate ISPs.

Send a copy of the spam, with full headers, to the Federal Trade Commission at uce@ftc.gov. They keep a database of fraudulent spammers.

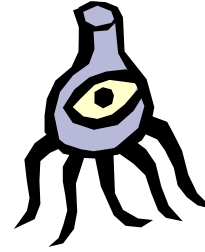
Support strong legislation at the state and federal level to stop the scourge of spam!!! Write, call or e-mail your Senators and Representatives and urge them to support strong legislation.

Pop-up – advertising that "pops up" in a small window of its own. Some websites pop up an unsolicited ad in a window on top of the page you are trying to view. Others hide the pop-ups beneath the site you're visiting, so that you see it when you finally close your main window. Some sites pop up several, or even dozens of pop-up ads – sometimes "freezing" the computer. The new pop-up scourge is controlled by one or more programs hiding on your computer, causing pop-ups even when you are not online! They are all bad, bad, bad!

The best way to squash pop-ups is with free software like Popup Stopper (www.panicware.com). Works perfectly and the price can't be beat!

Hoax – fictitious e-mail forwarded around the Internet by your well-meaning friends. Flesh-eating bananas, large corporations controlled by Satanists, viruses that cause your computer to catch fire – all are fabricated hoaxes.

Most of us have at one time been taken in by one of these, forwarding it to everyone in our address book only to be embarrassed to find out it's a fake. Any e-mail, even if it's from your mother, that says "Please forward this to everyone in your address book" is a



hoax. Any e-mail that promises you will get something for nothing is a fake.

Never, ever forward anything to everyone in your address book, no matter how "true" it sounds. Even if it is supposedly from IBM, Microsoft, or the government.

Type a few keywords from the e-mail into a search engine like Google (www.google.com) and follow several of the links that come up. You should quickly discover that the mail is a hoax.

Before you hit "forward", check out the "story" on one of the websites that specialize in de-bunking urban legends and hoaxes:

- ◆ Snopes (www.snopes.com)
- ◆ Urban Legends (www.urbanlegends.com)
- ◆ HoaxBusters (www.hoaxbusters.com)

Spyware – technology that aids in gathering information about a person or organization without their knowledge. Spyware usually comes "hidden" within software you voluntarily install. Along with what you wanted, you also get a small piece of software that installs itself behind the scene and sends back information on your surfing habits to an advertiser or marketing company.

You can control spyware with some free tools available on the web. The tools will either prevent spyware from getting on your machine, or remove it once it is there.

Ad-aware (www.lavasoftusa.com)
SpyBot Search and Destroy (http://beam.to/spybotsd)

Cookie – a small text file placed on your computer by a website you visit.

Cookies can be innocent, but some

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HEALTH

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Many of these Websites appear to have valid researched data.

Before you decide to believe or, worse forward e-mail with serious health claims, do a little checking. Start on the Web with www.urbanlegends.com or www.snopes.com that catalogue the more persistent rumors. These two sites also detail persistent legends on other topics in addition to health scare stories.

Then go to reliable health sites, like:

www.mayohealth.org for general health

www.medhelp.org especially good for cardiology

www.oncolink.org for cancer

www.cancer.gov for cancer

www.navigator.tufts.edu for nutrition

www.fda.gov for latest updates on food/drugs as well as extensive archives

So keep yourself informed and don't become one of the individuals caught in a web of confusion by believing the stories

and passing them on to others.

Many of us have been victim of health-related frauds, myths, and fallacies. We have to make many decisions about our health and care and want to make them will informed. This site will keep you up-to-date on the latest findings on health care frauds.

Quack Watch is an informative site that deals with such issues like growth hormone scams, coral calcium, and acupuncture. It has a section on allergies and alternative medicine. You might want to start with Tips for Navigating our Web Sites. In the "Quackery" section you will find the following sections: Seven Warning Signs of Bogus Science, Ten Ways to Avoid Being Quacked, Signs of a "Quacky" web site.

Always seek a second opinion, but please peruse www.quackwatch.org

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

CREEPIES

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operate as spyware.

Spyware-controlling software like Ad-aware will control spyware cookies, too. You can also exercise some control over cookies in Internet Explorer by clicking Tools, then Internet Options. Click the "Privacy" tab to allow or disallow various kinds of cookies on your system. Be aware that some features of some sites won't work properly unless you allow cookies.

Virus, worm - a piece of programming code that causes some unexpected and usually undesirable event, such as spreading itself (in your name!) to everyone in your address book, locking up your computer, or deleting important files. They can be transmitted as attachments to an e-mail, as downloads, or be present on a diskette or CD.

Install antivirus software and keep

it up-to-date. Popular brands include McAfee Virus Scan, Norton Antivirus, and TrendMicro PC-cillin. Free

antivirus software, which works well, is available at www.grisoft.com. HouseCall, a free online virus scanner, is available from TrendMicro at http://housecall.antivirus.com/housecall/start_corp.asp.

Don't allow "autopreview" features on your e-mail programs. When an e-mail message is previewed, it is really "opened," which can trigger a virus.

Don't open e-mails or attachments from unknown sources. Even when mail is from a trusted source (such as your mother), don't open any attachments unless you are expecting them without checking with the source first to be sure they intended to send the



attachment and are sure it's virus-free.

Trojan horse – similar to viruses and worms, Trojan horses are particularly nasty as they can open up ports on your computer, making it possible for an intruder to control your computer remotely.

Anti-virus software is not great at catching Trojan horses. You should install and periodically run a Trojan scanner, such as the free SwatIt (www.swatit.org).

If you use the available tools, your Internet experience will be more pleasant for you, your computer, and for all your e-mail correspondents. Don't forget the most important tool of all – YOUR BRAIN! Use it.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.