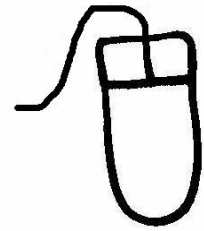




# OMUG

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

News



Vol. 14, No. 7

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

July 2006

## Good Turnout for Fundraisers

By Shirley Bellinghausen  
OMUG President

Summer hit with a bang!  
About time for us sun  
lovers.

Another month has flown by and it's time for the general meeting at the Senior Center. **John Acocks** will be introducing us to an interesting tool to make using our computers easier. It's free on your XP operating system.

Imagine your neighbor catching you talking to your PC. That's what it is, training your computer to recognize your voice. Read John's article here in the newsletter and better yet hear him at the meeting July 14.

I hope you enjoyed Super Saturday and many thanks to the members who staffed the booth.

The Rest Stop fundraiser is past and was successful again. Your willingness to help out on the 4 hour shifts at Maytown makes scheduling an easy task. (Well, almost.)

Besides those greeting the travelers, I want to mention some of those members who work behind the scenes and make it happen: **Max Whipps** who purchased most of the foods; **Ann Anthony** who baked the majority of the cookies; and **Keith and Liz Ross** who loan us their coffee pots and



cash box each year; **Don Hertzog** who handled all the money and still worked three 4-hour shifts and (even enlisted his grandson to help out); and the others who baked cookies.

I especially want to thank the early morning crew **Sandy Pishner** who gathered up all the supplies from Max, and with help from **Gary Lucas** and **Shawn McCormick** (new members) set up the booth for the first shift at 2 am Saturday Morning.

We have other good programs lined up for the future meetings. Officer Dunn will be back to give us more tips on protecting our ID; Smart Computing Magazine people; the Gamer will be back; and many other interesting presentations. We have a couple programs "in the box" for our Power Point members to present later also.

I'm just rambling on so will look for you at the meeting the 14th!



## Voice Recognition: The Future is Here

By John Acocks  
OMUG Vice President

Can you image sitting at your computer speaking in a normal conversational tone, watching your spoken words magically appear on your monitor?

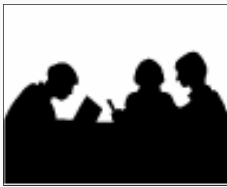
This is precisely what voice recognition technology does! Voice recognition is an application that is part of the Microsoft® XP Operating System—it is not a software program you need to purchase. It just needs to be installed and then 'trained' so the software recognizes the words you speak.

The major benefit of using voice recognition technology is that can it produce superior results to your current keyboarding skills. You can learn voice technology much faster than trying to improve your keyboarding-text entry skills.

Consider this: if you currently entering text at a rate of 40 words per minute, with about an hour's training, you will be entering text at 100

words per minute or greater. Consider the possibilities...just imagine dictating your e-mail. Attention

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## EXECUTIVE BOARD

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### KEY MEMBERS:

**APCUG Representative:** John Gerecht

**Budget Committee Chair:** Wim Verhoef

**Database Manager:** Max Whipps

**Elections Chair:** Bob Steinberg

**Historian:** David Belles

**Membership Chair:** Rich Cunningham

**Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:**  
Dixie Cattell

**Nominating Committee Chair:**  
Arlene Kapner

**Public Relations Chair:** Vivian Forrester

**Scholarship Committee Chair:**  
Bob Wing

**SIG Coordinator:** Bob Steinberg

**Special Activities Coordinator:** Open

**Visitors Coordinator:** Glenda Reed

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

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# Court Reporting

By Larry Jensen  
OMUG Secretary

We were introduced to the high-tech world of court reporting in the program presented by Dixie Cattell and one of her associates, Becky Lindauer (providing the realtime writing), along with colleagues Pam Jones and Nancy Bauer.

Court reporters are highly skilled people who must pass rigorous tests in recording meetings and court proceedings. The highest level is 260 words per minute with an accuracy of 95%. In order to do this, reporters use a machine called a Stenotype. The keyboard allows almost any syllable to be written in one stroke, or chord, rather than having to type each individual letter. Many times three or four words can be written in one stroke with a combination of keys. Pam described the role of the court reporter in the courtroom. The reporter is the "silent one" in the courtroom, recording everything that goes on. The Stenotype is connected to the reporter's laptop and in turn connected to a laptop on the judges' bench so that he may instantly review the testimony.

Pam showed us an antique machine that was used into the 30's, and Nancy brought her machine, which is the most modern \$5000 model, which is wireless.

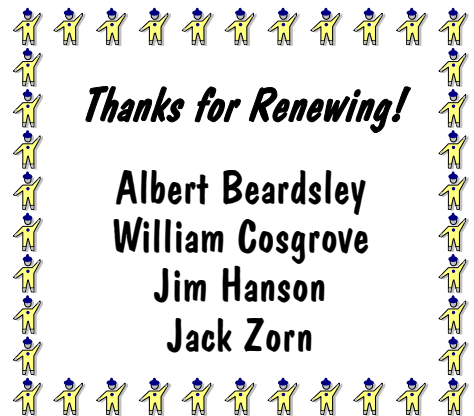
In Thurston County, all of the information is recorded digitally and then becomes available from selected locations. It is the only county working to make proceedings entirely paperless.

All of the time that the meeting was going on, Becky was recording it at her machine and the closed caption-

ing she produced was being projected on the screen. Those of us who use closed captioning, (and those who didn't even know about it before) saw what a high skill level is necessary to convert the audio portion of a broadcast to print, and why sometimes it is slightly changed.

Dixie described the freelancing side of court reporting. She and the

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**Thanks for Renewing!**

**Albert Beardsley  
William Cosgrove  
Jim Hanson  
Jack Zorn**



**Welcome to Our  
New and Rejoining  
Members**

**Rhonda Fabert  
Meta Heller  
Will & Molly Jeffers  
Lorraine Millay  
Linda Cosgrove  
Walter Jorgensen**

### Note from the Editor:

The newsletter banner has undergone a bit of transition...mostly due to software problems. Or maybe due to Editor problems! If you are confused, you're not alone. Please bear with me! I'm working on it!

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# Outside Events in June & July

By Larry Jensen  
OMUG Secretary

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President Shirley Bellinghausen opened the June 15 business meeting at 7:00 PM. Also present were Vice President John Acocks, Treasurer Max Whipps, Secretary Larry Jensen, Webmaster Pan Sonnenstuhl, Director at Large Gary Bigger and Membership Chairman Richie Cunningham.

The minutes of the June General Meeting and May Board meeting were accepted with corrections. Treasurer Max Whipps reported that there is \$3028.73 in the savings account, \$1854.06 in the scholarship account and \$364.90 in the checking account. Together with \$80.00 yet to be deposited, the treasury total is \$5327.69.

We have 179 primary members (1 more than last year) and 73 associate members for a total of 263. This is 12 less than a year ago.

The audit will be postponed until July.

John Acocks reported that he will present the July program on Voice Recognition.

The August program will be a presentation by Thurston County Sheriff's officer, John Dunn, who will be returning to further discuss computer fraud.

Shirley will do a review of the program "Spin it Again" by Acoustics, which makes possible the transferring of the music on LP's to CD.

John Webster will be able to do the June 27 eBay SIG. He has needed to resign from being special events coordinator due to family illnesses.

After considerable discussion, it was decided to drop the idea of printed pens and instead have more of the cards printed with OMUG information to be handed out to prospective members. Shirley will call Bill Gortz to find out if he has the template for the cards.



Larry Jensen and John Acocks have volunteered to act as backup to John Marshall in setting up for the General Meeting. John does a great job of setting things up, but others need to be available to help, especially if he is gone. It would make less work for one person if more are willing to help. It was suggested that John detail the procedures necessary so if he could not be present, set-up could still be accomplished. There should also be a list of all of the equipment necessary for setup, and its location. Shirley suggested that we should have an inventory of all OMUG equipment, along with a sign-out sheet so that we know who has which items. Max has this in the OMUG data base and will make copies available.

Larry shared an organizational chart which can be included in our New Member packets. Membership chairman Richie Cunningham will help coordinate membership materials for a packet for our new members.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

## OMUG Income & Expenses May 2006

**Income: \$204**  
[Membership Dues-\$200, Interest-\$4]

**Expenses: \$198**  
[Senior Center Donation-\$50, Internet SIG Supplies-\$13, Newsletter Copying-\$135]

**Net Income: \$6**

### OMUG Treasury as of 6/25/06

<b>Savings Account Balance:</b>	\$3029
<b>Scholarship Account Balance:</b>	\$1854
<b>Checking Account Balance:</b>	\$365
<b>Bank Accounts Total:</b>	\$5248
<b>To Be Deposited:</b>	\$80
<b>Treasury Total:</b>	\$5328



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# Back-Up Awareness Month

**By Ira Wilsker**  
APCUG Advisor;  
Columnist for The Examiner,  
Beaumont, Texas

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In case you had not heard, June was Backup Awareness Month. It is not a federally recognized holiday, nor is it one acknowledged by resolution from some governmental authority, but an awareness service of one of the largest manufacturers of hard drives, the newly merged Maxtor and Seagate.

Sure, Maxtor and Seagate will benefit if we all rush out and purchase a large capacity hard drive so we can backup our critical data in the event of a hard drive crash, or other tragedy that can damage or destroy our computers. This is really more of a win-win situation, as there is a very valid need for timely and comprehensive backups of our data. Lessons still unlearned from Rita, Katrina, and Wilma, as well as other countless disasters, fires, thefts, and other debacles should teach us that if we have a good backup of our files, we can easily survive a catastrophic data loss, and be back in operation promptly.

Imagine in any business or other commercial environment how much information is stored on hard drives. Hard drives are electromechanical devices, and as such will indeed fail at some time. Murphy's Law dictates that a hard drive will always fail at the most inopportune time.

Now imagine what would happen to that business or organization if suddenly all of its critical information was gone. No accounts receivable; no accounts payable; no client lists; no purchase orders; no em-

ployee or student data; no payroll and tax records; no correspondence; no records of any kind; and a plethora of other potentially devastating losses.

Next imagine the time and cost that a company would incur if it had to rebuild that amount of information from paper records, if the paper records indeed exist. Can you conceive the utter devastation that a company would suffer with a catastrophic data loss?

Data loss is not just a corporate or organizational threat, but a personal one too. On my home computer, for example, I have countless family photos, tax records, family financial information, archives of correspondence and other important documents, music, bookmarks, address books, email, and other information that would probably be irretrievable in the event of a complete hard drive failure. I really do not think that the IRS would accept as an excuse the fact that my hard drive crashed, losing my financial records.

We can backup our data in many ways without any substantial expense, or we can utilize sophisticated backup solutions.

Backing up can be as simple as copying critical files to CD, DVD, flash drive, or other storage media, using the integral copy function available on all computer operating systems.

We can use software, such as NTI's Shadow or Backup NOW! to manage our backup functions to our chosen media, or we can use utilities such as Symantec's (Norton) Ghost, to make a bit by bit copy of our hard drive which can be copied to a new hard drive, making it a mirror image of the original, ready to go.

Now that broadband internet connections are more of a rule than an exception, there are commercial services that will do online remote backup and storage at off-premise locations, secure and separate from the host or home location.

Seagate/Maxtor have published "best practices" at this website: [www.backupawareness.com/bestpractices.html](http://www.backupawareness.com/bestpractices.html)) defining the tasks necessary to insure the ability to recover our precious data. These practices can be summarized by the following tips (details on the website):

Develop a backup schedule – Make it routine, and not a task that we have to remember to accomplish. Most modern backup software and utilities either backup in real-time (NTI Shadow), or can be scheduled at predetermined times (NTI Backup NOW!).

Back up everything – it is not necessary to waste time sorting data, as the speed of backup utilities, hardware, and hard drives, as well as the large capacity of new hard drives, make it unnecessary to determine what to backup

Give yourself room to grow – The rule of thumb listed on the site recommends that the minimum size of backup drives (or other media or storage solutions) should be at least double the current size of the hard drives being backed up.

Back up automatically – Referred to in the industry as "Set it and Forget It", is a viable adjunct to backing up on schedule. Some real-time off-site backup services use a high speed internet connection to automatically back up all new data to an external location. Many software

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utilities are almost transparent, and perform backups automatically, and unattended.

Rotate backups – Use more than one drive or other system for backup. There are always risks that the backup itself can be damaged or otherwise flawed, and there is safety in redundancy. It is a good practice to store at least one current backup physically away from the location being backed up such that a catastrophe (fire, flood, etc.) at the host will not destroy the backup. It is also a good idea to be able to take a backup with you in the event of a crisis, such as when I took my external hard drive with a current backup of all of my files, when I evacuated from Hurricane Rita. With this external drive, I could also access critical files from another computer if needed, prior to returning home.

Don't procrastinate – Do not put off until tomorrow what you must be doing today. The complete Murphy's First Law of Computing is, "A properly backed up hard drive will never fail, but the first time that you do not have a current backup, your hard drive will always fail at the most inopportune time." Sadly, all too many of us learn the importance of a backup immediately after our hard drive fails, as we come to the realization that all is lost.

June should not really be backup awareness month; *every* month should be backup awareness month!

Websites:

[www.backupawareness.com](http://www.backupawareness.com)  
[www.ntius.com](http://www.ntius.com)  
[www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)  
[www.backupawareness.com/  
bestpractices.html](http://www.backupawareness.com/bestpractices.html)

*Ira Wilsker is also a Radio & TV show host. You may email him at [iwilsker\(at\)apcug.net](mailto:iwilsker(at)apcug.net)*

*There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. 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.*

### **Voice Recognition,**

*continued from page 1*

two finger typists: Help is on the way.

You will need to acquire a quality headset that includes a microphone. These usually cost from \$15 to \$25 and are available at RadioShack, Best Buy, etc. Your headset/microphone must be plugged into the computer's sound card either at the back of the computer or into the front of the computer if your headset has an USB connector.

To start voice recognition, open Word, click Tools on the menu bar, and then click Speech. This should open the Speech Recognition Language Bar which looks like an ordinary toolbar. It will appear near the top of your open window. The Language Bar will be your friend as you learn.

Once you locate it, click Tools on the Language Bar, then Options, and then click the Advanced Speech button near the bottom of the window. This opens the Speech Properties dialog box where you will establish your voice profile. Click New and key in your name. You'll need to use your headset from this point. Your voice profile is unique to you and allows your computer to distinguish your voice from other users who use voice recognition on your computer.

Another way is to open your control panel and click Sounds, Speech and Audio Devices, then Speech.

If this leaves you gasping for air, plan on attending the July 13 general meeting. I'll present a step-by-step demo and talk! All attending will receive hand-outs that will instruct you on how to work with this exciting technology. So mark your calendars for 6:30 p.m. on July 13th, and learn about this most exciting technology. See you then!



### **Court Reporting,**

*continued from page 2*

reporters with her firm do freelance reporting, which means they report depositions and hearings for attorneys and state agencies. As a freelance reporter, it is necessary for them to be a notary public in order to swear in the witness since there is no judge present. She also explained how they send their transcripts in electronic format and showed us a sample of one on her laptop and also a hard copy.

Dixie also described videoconferencing, the procedure where people in two remote locations are able to see and talk to each other via special

ISDN lines. Dixie has a videoconferencing office with a remote-controlled camera as well as a document camera. She has conducted videoconferences with people all over the world for purposes such as depositions, hearings or court trials as well as job interviews and various meetings, saving the cost of job applicants or witnesses traveling to the interviews or legal proceedings.

Pam emphasized that they need more court reporters and encouraged members to tell friends or family about this field and consider it as a career.

