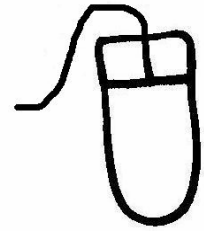




OMUG



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

News

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Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

September 2006

Annual Picnic at Priest Point Park

By Shirley Bellinghausen
OMUG President

You missed a good picnic if you didn't get to Priest Point Park on August 12! It was a lot of fun—we visited, played cards and Jarts, ate great salads, cakes and other goodies. John Acocks even bought a new grill to cook sumptuous hamburgers and hot dogs.



Some might have noticed a few more grey hairs in Max's and my head. We nearly had a disaster! Chris McCormick had questioned the **number** of the shelter at the meeting on the 10th. So



Max called the Parks Department Saturday morning, the 12th to verify our Shelter. He was told we had **cancelled** in October and changed the date. No. Oh no.



After many frantic phone calls, Parks arranged a lesser spot for us to use. Just as I was about to notify all of you, the girl from the Parks and Rec called and said the party in **Shelter #2** had cancelled and we had it. Now if you read carefully you will notice another discrepancy. We had advertised **Shelter #2** to you members by mistake; originally we had **reserved #3**. It's complicated but it all worked out. We now have next year scheduled for Shelter #3.

Free Software Packages

I have some for members to review. A couple were spoken for at the picnic, but I have more! *Media One Gallery* (all in one digital media solution); *Home Data Bank* (protect and organize your assets); *Scrapbook+* (vital storage system for graphics and text) *NTI BackupNow* (backup documents and pictures, etc.) And we have more offers of software from vendors.

Note: When you review this free software, you get to keep it! Values range from \$40 to hundreds. Sign up at the nametag table at general meetings or call or email me. Install on your computer and use it all you want. Write what you think of the product. **Suggestions:** Easy or hard to install? Instructions hard or easy to understand? Does it do what you expect from the advertising? Just what do you think of the program and would you recommend it to someone else? Pretty simple for good free software!

See you at the next General Meeting September 8th. We'll try the new setup and hear our speaker, Officer Jim Dunn, help us protect our money. Please come a little early to help with chairs. Thank you, all who have been helping—it is much appreciated!

Membership Is Up

By Larry Jensen
OMUG Secretary

President Shirley Bellinghausen opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Also present were Secretary Larry Jensen, Treasurer Max Whipps, Newsletter Editor Sister Dorothy Robinson, Webmaster Pat Sonnenstuhl and Directors at Large John Marshall and L. D. McNall.

Max reported that the income from the Rest Stop was \$1,370.84. At the present time we have \$2,933.75 in the savings account, \$3016.34 in the scholarship account, \$425.42 in the checking account and \$40.00 to be deposited for a total of \$6,415.51. We have 188 primary members and 77 Associate members for a total of 256, 15 more than at this time last year. The annual audit will be done September 13th.

Max reported that Don Hertzog has resigned as assistant Treasurer and assistant Database Manager.

Webmaster Pat Sonnenstuhl reported that the Reflector seems to be working well.

We are not included in APCUG's online list of members, but we should be. Shirley will check.

Raincoast has been canceled this year because of a lack of vendors.

Joanne Homolka will coordinate newsletter distribution, and will be assisted by Pat. The normal time of the folding activity will be changed to 2:00 PM. Dixie will be moving her office in November so we need to be looking for an alternate location in case the new one is not available.

After discussion, it was decided that the Newsletter deadline would be changed to the 20th of the month starting Sept. 20; the mailing would be moved back to the 1st of the month starting Oct. 1. John Marshall submitted an inventory of OMUG equipment stored at the Senior Center. He also



listed material that belongs to the Senior Center but is stored in the Computer Lab and used by OMUG.

John mentioned that he needs to have information on the equipment needed by the speaker at General Meetings so that he can have the proper materials available.

John Webster will not be able to lead the eBay SIG in September. John Marshall will find a substitute.

In a discussion about giving out cookies at the rest stop, some felt that one reason we went through so many cookies was that some people were too generous. We will work on developing guidelines for next time. We will also start earlier to solicit homemade cookies—we get better donations for homemade!

L.D. will work on a plan to provide rides to meetings for people who can't or don't like to drive at night.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

OMUG Income & Expenses July 2006

Income: \$1881

[Membership Dues—\$505, Rest Area Income—1371, Interest—\$5]

Expenses: \$698

[Insurance—\$325, Senior Center Donation—\$50, Mailbox Rental—\$119, Newsletter Copying—\$131, Rest Stop Supplies—\$73]

Net Income: \$1183

OMUG Treasury as of 8/25/06

Savings Account Balance:	\$2,724
Scholarship Account Balance:	\$3,016
Checking Account Balance:	\$150
Bank Accounts Total:	\$5,890
To Be Deposited:	\$180
Treasury Total:	\$6,190



What Makes OMUG Tick?

By Max Whipps
OMUG Treasurer

In a word—**VOLUNTEERS**—members who are willing to invest their time and talents in helping to do the many tasks, large and small, necessary to help OMUG fulfill the purposes outlined in our Articles of Incorporation.

Of course, the group's officers are the most visible, but they are by no means able to handle all of the things that need doing on a regular or periodic basis.

There are several key member positions that are essential to the continued efficient functioning of our group.

In my opinion, the most important key member position is that of the database manager. I say that, not because I currently fill the position, but because so many things depend on an accurate and up-to-date database.

For instance, our nametags used at the various meetings, membership cards, newsletter mailing labels, member renewal reminder letters, and various reports required by the Executive Board.

Database manager is one of the few that require competence in a particular type of software program, in this case, Microsoft Access or some other type of relational database program. This function also requires an assistant competent in basic database operations. Ideally, this function is performed by the treasurer because the treasurer initially receives the new and renewing member applications along with their checks. The database is updated first and then the accounting software.

Don Hertzog faithfully served as the assistant treasurer and database manager for several years, but has

found it necessary to resign those positions. Only the treasurer and assistant treasurer can sign checks on the OMUG account. Obviously, not having an assistant treasurer leaves the group at risk.

The position of Webmaster is another of the officer positions that requires a degree of competence in a particular type of software. Presently, we have no assistant webmaster which also leaves the function vulnerable.

Then too, we have a number of standing committees that are always in need of members willing to help. Among these are the Membership, Scholarship, Audit, Budget, Elections, Nominating, Public Relations, and Special Activities committees.

The membership committee is probably the most important standing committee we have in terms of day to day operations. It has a number of coordinator positions to accomplish various tasks under its purview. Among these are the New Member Coordinator responsible for contacting and welcoming new members; the Member Renewal Coordinator responsible for mailing reminder letters to those members whose membership is expiring; the Profile Coordinator responsible for developing and maintaining information on the skills and talents of our members for use when a particular task needs such skills; and the Visitors Coordinator responsible for greeting visitors to our meetings and following up with an individual invitation to join.

The Special Activities Committee is another committee that needs a number of special coordinators. Usually, each coordinator is responsible for the organizing and functioning of a specific event such as Super Saturday Coordinator, the Annual Picnic Coordinator, the I-5 Rest Stop Coordinator, and the Auction/Christmas Party Coordinator. Of

course, most volunteers that take on one of these can also use help, and none of them require any particular computer skills. Even if you're the most computer novice member in the group, you can be a big help. Keep in mind, the more people willing to help one of these coordinators, the smoother things will go and the less stressful it is on whoever has assumed the responsibility.

And, of course, there are our Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders. All of the SIG leaders should have an assistant willing to help at a particular SIG meeting and to facilitate the SIG in the absence of the SIG leader. If you feel like you could cover in a pinch, let the SIG leader know.

It's generally true that most volunteer organizations function because of a small number of dedicated persons willing to do more than their share for the good of the organization and its members. OMUG is no exception. If you look at the people serving on the Executive Board and other key positions, you find pretty much the same people who've been deeply involved for years, albeit, at varying positions and functions. The problem is that people wear out or get into ruts from years of repetition.

Consider making a greater commitment to the group. Besides helping others, you'll probably learn a lot about various software and computer tricks that will help you in other endeavors. Then too, there's a lot to be said from the satisfaction one feels when helping others.

Contact any board member to find out what you can do. This group can not only survive but *thrive* with people like **you** willing to help.



Quality Freeware

By **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**
Member, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

I found the article in the July Monitor on "Cost Efficient" software by Joseph Moran to be quite interesting, but noticed that much of the software had a price associated with it. So I thought I'd let you in on the absolutely free software I have been using for the past 2-5 years. In every case I have used it as my standard application for the purpose and, in many cases, totally removed any commercial software that carried out the same function. I have also upgraded the free software when the upgrades became available. All of the software in this article can be obtained without charge by downloading from the various Internet sites I have listed. In every case there is no "trial" period involved.

The foremost item on my list is **OpenOffice**. I am currently using version 2.0. This version includes word processing, spreadsheet, drawing, database, and presentation software. All of these applications produce documents that are interchangeable with their equivalents in Microsoft Office. OpenOffice will also export documents in either PDF or HTML format. You don't need any PDF software to produce documents that are readable by Adobe Reader (formerly known as Acrobat Reader). Unfortunately it can not open or edit PDF documents. It can open and edit documents in over 25 different formats including HTML, Word Perfect, Word, Adobe Photoshop, etc. You can obtain your free copy of this software from the site <http://www.openoffice.org/>

I also recommend **Firefox** and **Thunderbird** as free replacements for Internet Explorer and Microsoft's Outlook Express. With the latest versions of Firefox I have not run across any web sites that it cannot render correctly. That's not to say that some may exist, I just haven't found them. Firefox will transfer your favorites (bookmarks) from Internet Explorer. As for Thunderbird, it is similar in many ways to Outlook Express, but it

includes an RSS Reader that I have found useful. It also filters junk mail and places it in a special folder where you can review it if needed. Otherwise it will be automatically deleted at an interval that you can set. It doesn't remove 100% of the spam, but it does detect about 99% of what comes into my computer. One of the latest additions to Thunderbird is anti-phishing protection. Thunderbird warns you if it suspects that the message might be a scam. Thunderbird can import your address book from Outlook Express. Both Firefox and Thunderbird can be downloaded from www.download.com or if you prefer, from www.mozilla.com/firefox/ and www.mozilla.com/thunderbird.

As for anti-virus software, you can't beat **Avast** for ease of use and automatic updating. After downloading and installing the software it asks you to register. That simply includes giving up your e-mail address, name and postal address. You receive a license to use the software for a year for personal use. At the end of the year you re-register and get another year's free use. Avast is free for personal use, not for businesses or other organizations. However, non-profit organizations can buy Avast at a greatly reduced price. I have used Avast for several years and have installed it on more than 100 other personal computers. In no case have the users had any problems with this software. In addition, Avast does not sell your e-mail or postal address so you get no spam from this registration. Avast quietly updates itself frequently in the background while you continue to work. Then it simply reports that an update has taken place. I have seen days when I have had 3-4 updates in the same day. If you use a dial-up connection instead of cable/DSL, Avast will attempt to update whenever you go on-line. Since the downloads are usually less than 100 KB, they occur rapidly, even on a dial-up connection. The Home edition of Avast can be downloaded from www.avast.com/eng/avast_4_home.html. I recommend using this site instead of download.com as your anti-virus database will be more current.

For a good, reliable firewall I recommend **ZoneAlarm**. It is also free for personal use. I admit they will try to sell the Pro version when you install it, but the free version is really all you need. That is, assuming you have anti-virus and anti-parasite software installed on your computer. It used to be that dial-up users didn't really have much need for a firewall. However, in today's Internet world, I wouldn't want to connect to the Internet without a good software firewall. While traveling with my laptop, I kept both my anti-virus and firewall updated and running for every connection. ZoneAlarm can be downloaded from www.zonealarm.com. Click on the download link and then the ZoneAlarm tab.

—To be continued in October—

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: bwsail@yahoo.com.

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Free Geek

Free Geek comes to Olympia! They are getting started and here's what they do with your old computers:

- Give them new life, new homes
- Recycle those they can't revive
- Help non-profits with computers and computer help
- Help individuals who want to learn more about computers
- Provide individuals with an opportunity to learn how to build computers
- Offer individuals a chance to *earn a computer* by volunteering

See www.oly-wa.us/freegeek or call them at 360-705-9999. Regular hours 1-7 p.m. Thursdays/Saturdays. Call for other times.