



OMUG



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

News

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Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

April 2008

Change Is Coming!

By Shirley Bellinghausen
OMUG President

This will probably be my last article as President. That sounds rather final—but I will still be around at meetings and activities, just not as much at first.

If OMUG continues to be a viable group, the incumbent officers you have are excellent, efficient and have OMUG's success at heart.

I certainly hope for OMUG's continuance. I have learned much from all the members who have become friends and mentors in the past 13 years. This is my 2nd



term as President and I think I have held every other office at least once. And have enjoyed every one!


Now it's time for someone to step up and add some new blood, new ideas and new ways of handling the day-to-day business of OMUG.

The members who attended the last meeting and filled out the survey gave the Board a slight

insight into what some members would like to see in the organization. The survey will be made available for the rest of you to let us know your feelings.

Election of Officers is April 10. I sure hope you plan on coming to this meeting.

A strange thing happened at the drawing of the door prize in March. Gwen Stimmel's ticket number was drawn 3 times in a row. And since she had won the month before she graciously donated her portion of money back to the OMUG treasury. A big thanks to a generous member!

Spring is here, and with its coming, hope again rises for change and new life not just in our organization but also in our whole world. Let it be so! 

The Big DTV Transition

By Sr. Dorothy Robinson
OMUG Newsletter Editor

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 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 <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.

<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

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Vice-President: Open

Secretary: Larry Jensen
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Director at Large: Marilyn Hanna
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Director at Large: Phil Vogel
director3@olymug.org 480-5383

KEY MEMBERS

APCUG Representative:
John Gerecht (see page 6 for email)

Audit Committee Chair:
Wim Verhoef

Database Manager:
Gary Bigger 426-7055

Elections Chair:
Bob Steinberg

Historian:
David Belles

Membership Chair: Open

Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:
Open

Nominating Committee Chair:
Arlene Kapner (see page 6 for phone)

Public Relations Chair:
Vivian Forrester

Scholarship Committee Chair:
Bob Wing

SIG Coordinator: Open

Special Activities Coordinator:
Glenda Reed 705-8958

Visitors Coordinator:
Joanne Homolka

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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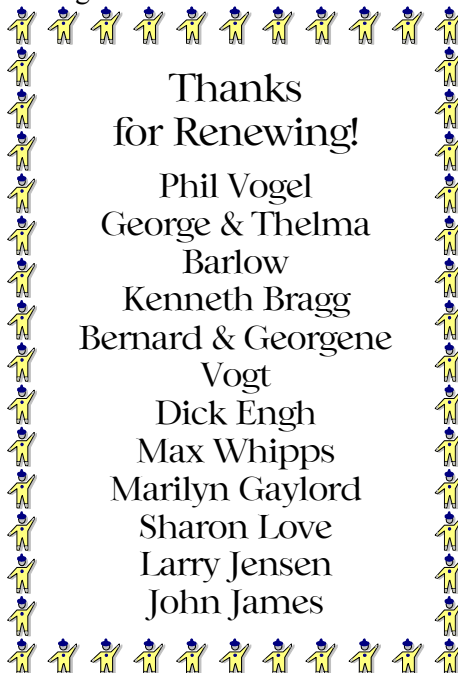
Bylaws Changes Approved

President Shirley Bellinghausen opened the March 13 OMUG General Meeting at 7:00 PM. There were 25 present.

Shirley said that no one has yet come forward to run for President or Vice President. Without these officers, OMUG cannot continue to exist.

John Marshall announced that the Hot Topics SIG will return to the 4th Tuesday of the month. The next Hot Topic will be on "How to set up your own blog", led by Sister Dorothy Robinson. The plan is to help people set up their own blogs and to find their way around the help files. It will be one session, and will occur on March 25 at 7:00PM in the computer room at the Senior Center

Pat Sonnenstuhl has a "Presentation in a Box" from Microsoft. She asked if anyone would be interested in taking it and presenting it to the club, but there were no takers at this time. Vince Hughes explained that he had only agreed to be a *co-leader* of the Genealogy SIG. He spends a good deal of time away, so there would need to be someone else to lead when he is gone. Since co-leader Jim Wiest



Thanks
for Renewing!

Phil Vogel
George & Thelma
Barlow
Kenneth Bragg
Bernard & Georgene
Vogt
Dick Engh
Max Whipps
Marilyn Gaylord
Sharon Love
Larry Jensen
John James

has left the club and no one else expressed an interest, the SIG will no longer be held. Vince said that for those that are interested in genealogy, the Puget Sound Genealogical Society meets the 2nd Thursday (except July and August) at 7:00PM at the Thurston County Courthouse, Bldg 1, Room 152 in Olympia. The Timberland Library also has Genealogy classes.

The Bylaws Committee brought the results of their work to be voted on by the membership. The committee consisted of Shirley Bellinghausen, Phil Vogel, Don Hertzog and Chairperson Marilyn Hanna.

Using a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Marilyn, Phil went through the Bylaws and explained the changes the committee recommended along with the reasoning behind the changes.

During the presentation of the Bylaws amendments proposed by the Bylaws committee, Max Whipps moved that the proposed amendments relating to the combining of the position and duties of Treasurer and Database Manager be rejected. The motion was seconded by John Marshall and the motion was carried by affirmative vote of more than 3/4 of the members present.

Following further discussion of the proposed amendments, Pat Sonnenstuhl moved that the remainder of the proposed amendments be adopted excluding the portions rejected on the first vote. The motion was seconded by Shirley Bellinghausen and carried by affirmative vote of more than three quarters of the members present. The amended Bylaws are available on the OMUG website.

There was some discussion of the difference between Bylaws and Standing rules. The Bylaws are the broad struc-

Continued on page 6: **Bylaws...**

"The World Is Run By Those Who Show Up"

By Larry Jensen
OMUG Secretary



President Shirley Bellinghausen opened the OMUG March 20 business meeting at 8:00 PM. Also present were Secretary Larry Jensen, Treasurer Gary Bigger, Webmaster Pat Sonnenstuhl, and Directors at Large Arlene Kapner, Marilyn Hanna and Phil Vogel. Newsletter Editor Sr. Dorothy Robinson was absent.

Minutes of the March General Meeting and February Board meeting were accepted, and Larry reported that amended Bylaws have been distributed. He also said that 30 empty ink cartridges were collected at the General Meeting and will be turned into Rapid Refill Ink for reimbursement or recycling. Rapid Refill reports quarterly so it may be some time before we know the value of the cartridges.

Pat reports that all is working well with our website.

Our total income in February was \$396.62, according to Gary, and our expenses were \$474.87, for a net decrease of \$78.25.

We had 166 Primary members (21 fewer than at this time last year), and 68 Associate members, (2 fewer than last year).

Arlene brought a letter from another organization she belongs to—which she thought would be a good model for a letter to send to our members urging greater participation. Shirley took the letter to study so she could make a recommendation.

Arlene needs at least two more people to sign up for her Beginners Word SIG, starting on April 7th. Pat will put a notice on the Reflector.

Marilyn said that the Bylaws revisions have been accepted and posted. Even though she will not be on the board, she will work on the new members packet.

The board voted unanimously to accept Jim Wiest's resignation as Vice President.

Arlene reported that she had not heard back from some of the nominating committee, but she has several possibilities for the Director positions. She does not have any candidate for President or Vice President. A number of people said that they would serve on committees.

Shirley had received about two dozen completed surveys back and shared some of the results. In general, people

seemed happy with OMUG and there were a number of suggestions for future programs. Steps will be taken to get wider distribution of the survey.

Pat has some suggestions for changes in the Standing Rules and asked that a copy be sent to her.

Shirley will talk to Wim Verhoef about forming the Audit committee

Jim Bevan has offered to speak at a meeting. He can do a number of programs.

There was a lengthy discussion of what to do if we do not find candidates for President and Vice President. It was finally decided that Shirley would put a notice on the Reflector explaining that without a President or Vice President, OMUG would be forced to disband.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM. ☞

OMUG Income & Expenses February 2008



Income: \$ 397

(Membership Dues- \$380, Raffle Sales \$15, Bank Interest \$2)

Expenses: \$ 475

(Senior Center Donation \$50, Newsletter \$331, Membership Postage \$82, & Treasurer Supplies \$12)

Net Decrease: \$ 78

OMUG Treasury as of 03/19/2008

Savings Account Balance:	\$2,120
Scholarship Account Balance:	\$3,533
Checking Account Balance:	\$ 113
To Be Deposited:	\$ 175
Treasury Total:	\$5,941

Why I Like the Ubuntu Operating System

By Phil Vogel
OMUG Director at Large

My interest in alternative operating systems started 20 years ago, when I worked for the State of Maryland during a year of computer chaos. We had a good office system, using WordPerfect, but some high State official(s) made a decision to go with Microsoft Word. At our facility, WordPerfect was no longer funded and we were no longer able to use it. Yet our mental facility didn't have the budget to buy the Word copies for all of our computer, only for a few.

Thus, my co-workers and I became interested in alternative sources of software. One of the writing programs that we used was the predecessor of OpenOffice and not very good. And because of the high prices charged for an inferior product (Word, compared to WordPerfect) at the time, we looked to finding an alternative Operating System to Microsoft products. I remember investigating the Red Hat distribution of Red Hat Linux at the time. But at that time it was not up to par with Microsoft's Windows 95.

When I joined OMUG, I was delighted to find that there was a Linux SIG. "Linux" is a term for many operating systems (OS) using the Linux "kernel" or "heart" or "engine." The kernel "drives" the system like a car engine powers a car. Conrad Schuler, one of the leaders of the Linux SIG, was promoting SUSE, a "distribution" of Linux which originally came from Germany. Paul Braget, an-

other leader, liked Ubuntu. When I joined, I found I was totally lost. However, I stuck it out and some of the understanding and data is beginning to stick to the walls of my mind.

I listened, worked with the Linux programs on the computers in the Senior Center and became convinced that I wanted to try it out for myself. I like laptops. I can grab a computer and move it to a room or across the country easily. In this country, all computers are Microsoft friendly but only some brands and some models of the other brands such as Dell are Linux-compatible.

I decided after some research to take a chance on a new Toshiba Qosmio. We had difficulty installing SUSE and because of inexperience it became corrupted. However, it was easier to install Ubuntu.

"Ubuntu" is a South African word which means, "I am because you are." I am writing this article because you are here, OMUG. I am using Ubuntu because a lot of people around the world contribute to its innovation, maintenance, and security. By the way, the Toshiba came with Windows Vista Home Edition. I only use it for QuickBooks; that is, I can boot into Vista when I need to, but use Ubuntu most of the time.

I use Ubuntu to surf the web because it has a very secure hard kernel. It is almost impossible to attack a Linux based machine because all the software programs are attached to the outside of the

kernel. At most a particular program will become dysfunctional but not the operating system. For this reason about 90 percent of the servers around the world use Linux based software. Some servers are so reliable that service is minimal.

The Linux kernel is simple, clean and fast, allowing me to turn it on and be on the web in a fraction of the time required by my Windows machine. My web browser is FireFox, an excellent free program.

I am writing this article with OpenOffice because it is another excellent writing program that is on a par with Microsoft Office. And it is a free program also. I must admit, though, that Microsoft's "Access" program is superior to OpenOffice's "Data."

All the above programs are "open source," which means that you can obtain them for free by a download, or on DVD or CD for a nominal charge. However, there are also companies that will supply a person with disks, manuals and service contract just like Microsoft. But everyone is bound by the EULA (End User License Agreement) of the "open source" contract, including companies and also individual users like me. For instance, anyone who comes up with a change or improvement must make it available to any one else for free.

So this is why I like Ubuntu, FireFox and OpenOffice. I also use other features such as watching movies, burning DVD's, and

Continued on page 6: Ubuntu...

Continued from page 1: ...DTV

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 centre-daily.com, "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, 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 <http://www.dtv.2009.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 air wave spectrum or the intricacies of HDTV.

The Benton Foundation page at <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.

CNN.com's take on this topic in January of 2006: (http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/04/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. ☹

Continued from page 2: ...**Bylaws**

tural foundation upon which the group functions and can only be amended by the membership. The Standing Rules manage the day-to-day operations and can be updated by the Executive Board at any official meeting.

Arlene Kapner announced that she needed two more people to sign up for her Beginning Computer SIG so her minimum is met and she can go ahead with it. It is scheduled to begin April 7th.

The Nominating Committee had no report on possible candidates for office.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.PM. 🖨

Continued from page 4: ...**Ubuntu**

WiFi—and they work well. Now I want to edit and burn a home made movie. Plus Ubuntu has an extensive Internet support system. New programs and updates are coming out all the time. It is an example of a technology rising up from the grassroots rather than from the top down. 🖨

In Zulu, ubuntu is “umuntu.” In a Zulu phrase that old people use: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* which very simply means, “A person is a person through people.” Paraphrased from Scott Hanselman’s <http://computerzen.com> —Ed.

OMUG Supporters

We are thankful for the many people, organizations and businesses who support OMUG.

Below is a list of a few who have given back to the community by assisting OMUG in its mission to help computer users help computer users and their community.

Our supporters provide services and discounts, give of their time, provide space for OMUG activities, introduce OMUG members to new products, share knowledge and expertise, provide OMUG with software and hardware, or provide educational opportunities. All of them are appreciated.

Senior Services for South Sound
Olympia Computer Central
IPMA
Adobe
Microsoft
PowerQuest
Jasc Software
Cartridge Care, Inc

**Idea for a new SIG?
Tell any OMUG board member!**



MEETING LOCATIONS

Capital High School:
2707 Conger Ave NW
in Olympia. Follow the signs to the computer lab from the lower parking lot.

El Sarape Restaurant:
1200 Cooper Point Road in West Olympia near Staples and the Post Office.

The Olympia Center:
222 Columbia Street NW in Olympia.

The Olympia Library:
313 8th Ave SE, corner of 8th and Franklin.

Note: The computer lab at the Olympia Senior Center is on the second floor behind the boutique.

