



OMUG



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

News

Vol. 16, No. 9

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

September 2008

Why Pay Money for Long Distance Calls?

By Max Whipps
OMUG President

Before getting to my primary topic, I wanted to say that the OMUG Picnic was a smashing success in spite of the heat. The shelter at kitchen #1, located in the Rose Garden of Priest Point Park, provided welcome shade for everyone except our valiant chef Phil Vogel who was spelled at times by Gary Bigger. A huge thank-you to Phil & Gary. Gary also did the shopping and brought all the supplies. One noticeable difference in this year's picnic was that almost everyone stayed around after eating and just enjoyed each other's company. Those members who didn't attend really missed out.

On a completely different subject, this old guy continues to be amazed at how computers are changing communication. My Mary is currently in Hungary getting her teachers set up for the fall semester. She'll be there about 2½ weeks and we've always talked nearly every day while she's there. This year, however, the calls are costing us absolutely nothing!

The reason for that is Skype. Mary and I have been talking computer to computer. I use a headset with a microphone as my



laptop doesn't have a built-in mike. It's really nice to be able to call anywhere in the world and talk as long as I want for free.

Skype is software that uses a form of VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) which allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. Calls to other Skype users are always free, while calls to other landlines and mobile phones can be made for ridiculously low fees. It can be downloaded for free from <http://www.skype.com/download/skype/windows/> (for Windows users). It's very easy to install and set up. Skype is also available for Linux, Macintosh, and other operating systems.

There are different types of VOIP. Comcast offers what they call Digital Voice. Their program is designed to only call either landline or cell phones. You use a regular telephone to call with, not a microphone and speaker with your computer. They charge a flat charge of \$39.95 plus taxes etc. There are no charges for long distance any-

where in the United States or Canada. With my other job as secretary for the 14th Cavalry Association, that's important as I call all over the country almost daily. Overseas calls differ by country called, but are much cheaper than regular phone companies.

If only computers were free.

Vista Lovers

Does that hovering mouse drive you mad when it suddenly opens whatever it's over? Go to control panel—> mouse—>device settings—>settings—> and UN-CHECK "Enable Tapping" (this is found by highlighting Tapping on left). Ahhh, peace at last!

September 11 Program at the General Meeting: Electronics in Elections

Thurston County Auditor
Kim Wyman
and Assistant Manager for
Elections Tillie Naputi-Pullar
will talk about elections in the
electronic age in which we
live and how computers con-
tribute to the way we vote.
This is a presentation you'll
want to hear!



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The Olympia Microcomputer Users Group is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping computer users improve their skills with computers.

OMUG News Published monthly
 PMB 225
 3430 Pacific Ave SE Suite A6
 Olympia, WA 98501-2177
 September 2008 Vol. 16, No. 9

“Revolution OS”

By Larry Jensen
 OMUG Secretary

President Max Whipps opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. There were about 25 present.

Max reminded everyone of the OMUG picnic on August 16. There was a brief discussion of its location.

Max then introduced Vivian Forrester, Vice President and Program Chairperson. She in turn introduced the evening’s presenter, member Paul Braget, who is the GNU/Linux SIG Leader. Paul started programming in 1973, built his first computer in 1981 and designed his first home network in 1990. Paul has an Associate in Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, U. of Washington, and ATA degrees (Associate in Technical Arts) in Computer Programming, Network Administration and in Web Trek Computer Programming—all from South Puget Sound Community College. He is the owner of Nisqually Paul’s Computer Consulting.

Paul showed a very interesting and well-done documentary on the history and philosophy of Open Source programming. The GNU/Linux operating system was developed as an alternative to the proprietary operating systems offered by major companies. It is free in the sense that users

have the freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software.

At the end of the documentary, Paul asked David Thompson to join him in answering questions. Among other things, they were asked the practical advantage of using GNU/Linux. They mentioned several. It is very secure; there is no problem with viruses. It is easy to use and when there are updates, they are completely new rather than being patched. Changes may be made by anyone but they are first peer-reviewed so the system can advance rapidly.



Paul Braget,
 GNU/Linux SIG Leader

Vivian announced that the next program in September will be presented by Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman and Assistant Manager for Elections Tillie Naptui-Pullar on the use of computers in elections.

John Marshall was the winner of the door prize. 🖥️

Thanks
for Renewing!

Dena Mowell
Bob Steinberg
Bob Elves
Russ and Janet
Richardson

Welcome, New
& Returning
Members!

Ryan Perry
Walter Jorgensen
John Gerecht

Picnic Pictures Now on Our Website

By Larry Jensen
OMUG Secretary

President Max Whipps called the OMUG business meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Also present: Secretary Larry Jensen, Treasurer Gary Bigger, Newsletter Editor Sister Dorothy Robinson, Webmaster Pat Sonnenstuhl, Directors at Large Arlene Kapner and Tonney Yamane. Absent: Past President Shirley Bellinghausen, Vice President Vivian Forrester and Director at Large Jim Simmons.

Max commented on the picnic. About 25 people attended, and everybody seemed to have a good time. It was a very convivial group and nearly everybody was there until 2:30.

Max delivered copies of the Auditor's Report. It was very favorable. It noted improvements in the financial process and commended OMUG Treasurer Gary Bigger on the job he is doing.

Minutes of the July board Meeting and August General meeting were accepted.

Sister Dorothy mentioned that she had gotten an e-mail from one of the members that she would be able to use in the Newsletter, She would like to have more input from members. In the discussion, it was suggested that she directly ask members to contribute.

Pat indicated that everything is going fine with the website. Pictures of the picnic have been posted online.

Gary reported that total income in July was \$351.03. Expenses were \$184.04. We have 158 Primary members, (24 less than last year) and 70 Associate members, (the same as last year). Total Members are 228 (24 less than last year).

There is some income from donations and it was suggested that that a place be added to the Renewal Letter for a donation. Gary also suggested that we might modify the application form to include a space for donations.

Arlene will make up a certificate of appreciation for Paul Braget for his presentation at the last General Meeting.

Arlene's Beginning Word SIG will start October 6 and continue on the 13, 20 and 27. At some point Arlene may have to resign her position as SIG leader because of other obligations.

Tonney discussed placement of the tables and chairs after our meetings with the Senior Center staff. They said that we are doing fine.



In unfinished business, Sister Dorothy talked to David Thompson and as a result he has modified his Web page to reflect the fact that the Linux SIG is an OMUG function.

Max has the copies of the survey. He would like to be able to reduce the information to a form that could be entered in a database but in this case it is difficult. It was suggested that since Shirley has been very interested in this project, that she be given the task of summarizing the data.

In new business, Max urged everyone to find an assistant who could attend Board Meetings if they could not attend themselves. There was some discussion about changes in the OMUG brochure. The cartoon on the front was one possible change.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM. ☞

Invite a friend to attend an OMUG meeting. If your friend joins, YOU get 3 free months and your friend gets the benefits of membership!

OMUG Income & Expenses July 2008



Income: \$ 351

(Membership Dues- \$340, Raffle Sales \$8, Bank Interest \$3)

Expenses: \$ 184

(Senior Center Donation \$50, Mail Box Rental \$119, Speaker Gift \$15)

Net Increase: \$ 167

OMUG Treasury as of 08/19/2008

Savings Account Balance:	\$2,962
Scholarship Account Balance:	\$3,003
Checking Account Balance:	\$ 149
To Be Deposited:	\$ 87
Treasury Total:	\$6,201

Familiar Faces:

Patricia Perry

A profile of someone you've seen around OMUG meetings but may not know much about. —Editor

Before retiring, I held different jobs requiring working on computers. The problem is they were each very specific to that particular job, and I never grasped the overall understanding of the system. I joined OMUG hoping to become familiar with the language enough to at least be able to describe problems intelligently to support people. (I had a very rude response to my ignorance when calling comcast once.) Unfortunately the conversation at OMUG tends to go over my head at the meetings and I haven't been very diligent about attending. (I know—you have to buy the ticket if you expect to win the lottery.)

Max has been so good to come to my house and go over problems with me. He is patient, pleasant and really to be appreciated.



**Max Whipps,
OMUG President
and Volunteer
Technician**

My use of the computer is to stay in touch with friends and relatives here and abroad. If there isn't time to sit down and write a letter, it's always easy to send a joke or inspiration that lets them know I'm thinking about them—and visa versa. When shopping, planning a trip, or just researching something of interest, the internet has everything we need at our fingertips (plus hours of entertainment).

I'm also in a writing class and secretary of an Interfaith Works committee, so word processing is a blessing.

My sister and I are the last to know of our family heritage from Finland and England, so I joined the Memoir class at the Washington State Museum to write something to pass on to my children and grandchildren. They were thrilled to receive it and loved the stories of family members now passed. I would highly recommend this class. It's really an important gift. Plus, it's interesting to hear the writings from the rest of the class. I've been attending for three years now. It's 1:00-3:00 every Tuesday and only \$6.

My most recent computer story is: I went to Circuit City to buy a computer that was in their ad. Never heard of Acer, but it comes with a 19-inch flat screen, speakers, a printer, and is set up to copy and play cds and videos. \$479 seemed like a good price for all that and I came ready to buy.

The sales clerk wrote it up. I looked at the total—\$706. Didn't compute. He said, "Well, you will want us to clean it up for you. It will run a lot faster without all the ads and pop ups. (On a new computer?) I told him I'll take my chances.

When he took off that fee, it was still too high. "Oh, well, you'll want the 22-inch screen. If you don't buy it now, you'll just come back for it later." No thank you. 19" is much better than my present 17". Turns out they didn't have a 19-inch in stock and ended up giving me last year's model—which was almost identical—for \$40 less. It was a struggle, but I ended up feeling it was a good price, and the computer is working just fine. Wonder if they ever put that over on anyone. ☹

A picture of Pat Perry wasn't available at press time; we'll try to print it next month—Editor

Upcoming Programs

By Vivian Forrester
OMUG Vice President
and Program Director

Here are the General Meeting programs through the end of 2008: Mark your calendars and invite guests! All our programs allow ample time for questions and answers.

September 11: Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman and Assistant Manager for Elections Tillie Naputi-Pullar on the subject of **"Computers in Elections."**

October 9: OMUG scholarship recipient Chuck Vose on **"Web 2.0, Its Advantages & Problems Yet to Be Resolved."**

November 13: Glenda Reed presenting **"Publisher 2007."** This is a Microsoft computer program that Glenda researched earlier this year.

December 11: Christmas Party and Silent Auction!!! This is one of the best get-togethers we have each year—a potluck with good food and company, and a chance to find a bargain on computer equipment or software (or to donate a bargain from *your* stash). Make plans! ☹

Vista SendTo Tip

Vista does quite a few things differently from previous versions of Windows. Where it stores the SendTo folder is one of them. Look in C:\Users\username\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\SendTo —where you can add shortcuts. If you try to add shortcuts to the SendTo folder in your Vista Personal folder, you'll get an "access denied" message—since it's just a pointer (shortcut) to the real folder. SendTo is a quick way to copy a file to a given location without opening the file, or to zip a file to compress it for emailing. ☹

Security & Deleting Files: A Common Misconception

By **Bob Schwartz**,
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's
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You have just deleted a file from your hard drive. It's gone, isn't it? Sorry! It is still there.

You want to clean up your hard drive, so you format it. It is now clean. Nothing is on it anymore, right? Nope! Everything is still there, except for the file directory.

How can this be? Doesn't Delete mean remove? Doesn't Format clean the disk?

Each file system has a file directory which records the file name and its location.

To delete a file, the disk system only alters the file's name in the file directory, usually by changing the first letter of the name. Formatting goes one step further, it just empties the file directory. Neither does anything to the files on the disk! They remain.

To clean a drive, either overwrite the whole drive or the unused space. The most common way to clean drives, especially older drives, is to write fixed or random data obliterate the old files.

Fortunately, all ATA drives over 15-20 GB produced since 2001 have an internal drive command that will clean the drive sufficiently that it will meet DOD requirements. At the University of California at San Diego's Center for Magnetic Recording Research (CMRR) you can download their free program for Secure Erase, entitled "HDDerase.exe". Its use meets U.S. Government requirements for disk erasure. Secure Erase should provide the greatest peace of mind. Internet Commentary suggests it is even better than mechanically shredding the disks.

If you have a good machine with good software that you would like to pass on to some else, and you don't

have all the original disks - remove personal information. I suggest this approach:

1. "Delete" the contents of: all the "My" folders—My Documents, My Pictures, My Music; Recent; Temp or Temporary folders; Recycle Bin; Cookies; Downloads; and the entire folders for Quicken and Tax preparation software.

2. Clean your Registry of all personal data. For XP, go to Start/Run, type regedit and press Enter. Go to edit and click on find. Enter your last name, click on find next. When the first entry is found, go to edit and select modify. Delete your name (it should be in color). Depressing the space bar may clear it. Go back to edit and click on find next, etc. Keep on until you get a message that you have reached the end. Then repeat the above with your first name, then your street, your phone number, bank name, broker name, and anything else of a personal nature that you used.

3. Find and download a registry cleaner. Use it to remove unnecessary items from the registry. Ccleaner is an example.

4. Defragment the drive. This condenses the files and moves them toward the beginning of the drive.

5. Locate and download a wipe application such as bcwipe. Use it to wipe (overwrite) all unused space.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before editing your "registry," back it up first, please.

This should effectively sanitize your disk, leaving it clean, safe and usable. Loss of personal information and the risk of identity theft is a risk

for you. For a business, the loss of personal, financial, or medical data may subject it to risk from recent laws, both federal and state.

I have been repairing or rehabilitating older machines as a hobby to give them a second life. There are many good machines and plenty of worthy recipients. If there is good software worth keeping, remove all personal data. If the software is not worth keeping, then wipe the disk clean to install an operating system and applications.

Removing the hard drive before you dispose of an old machine is not a solution, unless you plan to use it in your new machine, or store it permanently—you still ultimately have to sanitize it.

Programs available, free or fee, include: Secure Erase (mentioned above), Secure Delete, Wipe Drive, Acronis Privacy Expert, East-Tec Eraser, East-Tec Dispose Secure, Eraser, SysInternals SDelete, Darik's Boot and Nuke (dban), OverWrite, Wipe, Kill Disk, BCWipe, and Autoclave. This list is NOT exhaustive. And, you have to determine which is suitable to (1) wipe the entire drive or (2) wipe only the unused space.

Bottom line is, when you give away or dispose of a used computer, either clean the hard drive yourself or give the machine to someone you can trust who will do it for you. The comments and opinions here are wholly mine. I welcome alternative perspectives. ☞

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

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2008 Picnic Fun!



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
- 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.

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

