

Palma Computer Club



May/June 2009

Next Meeting

May 13, 2009

***10th Birthday of our
Computer Club Website***

Join us as we review website contents, as well as highlighting some of the more useful and the "more fun" contents of the website.

USER FRIENDLY

IN THIS ISSUE

From The President's Desk.....	3
Editors Corner.....	4
Photography Special Interest Groups.....	5
Kindle 2.....	6
Desktop Zoom.....	7
Internet Explorer 8.....	8



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Treasurer: Bob Ruben

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User Friendly is an electronic publication for members of the Palmia Computer Club. It is published and distributed during the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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User Friendly is your newsletter. It's objective is to serve every member. If you have a suggestion for an article for publication, or if you would like information about a specific topic, please contact the Palmia Computer Club President, or the User Friendly editor. This newsletter is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to learn.

Guidelines

Articles (1) must be submitted to the Managing Editor no later than the 10th day prior to the month of publication; (2) should be no longer than 1,200 to 1,500 words (approximately three columns), although longer articles may be published; (3) may be edited by staff for clarity, spelling, grammar, and space available. Articles should be relevant to the membership of the Palmia Computer Club. The choice of articles to be included in any issue is solely the prerogative of the Editorial Staff.

Computer Club Special Interest Groups

SIGs meet from 3:00 to 4:30 P.M. on the specified Fridays unless noted otherwise:

1st Friday- Windows/Visa.....Barry Robbins

2nd Friday - Computer Potpourri.....Barry Robbins

3rd Friday: Using your digital camera..Harvey Gershenson

4th Friday - Photo Editing & Scanning.....Don Yenche

Note: Questions about email and use of the internet will be incorporated into the 1st and 2nd Friday program conducted by Barry Robbins.

There is also a HELP SIG! This SIG is intended for beginners to answer your basic questions relating to computers (This is not a class). It meets on the first, third and fourth Mondays of each month at 10:00 A.M. The SIG leader is Joe

Contacting Board Members and Officers

All Board members and officers are available for help or information via email addresses as follows:

Shelly Stern, President - sk.stern@cox.net

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Palmia Computer Club meetings are scheduled for 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of every month except July, August and December. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for Q&A and socializing. Visitors are welcome. For visitors from outside the Palmia community, our address is: 21455 Monterey, Mission Viejo, CA 92692. The parking lot is on the left, just inside the Monterey gate. Telephone: 949-472-5075.

New Special Interest Group (SIG)

Confused about operating your Digital Camera (or just want some tips to enhance your digital photography)? Join Harvey Gershenson for his SIG on digital cameras on the third Friday of the month. New hours for all are 3 to 4:30 P.M.

Please Join us in welcoming our New Special Interest Group Coordinator, Judy Blehm

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Shelly Stern

There was no general meeting in April, yet it was an active month for the Computer Club. We have a new membership chairperson. After several years of devoting time and effort in the membership role, Leonard Schupak asked to be relieved. During his years of service Leonard developed and maintained a comprehensive database of membership, past and present. We are most grateful for all of his efforts.

The membership baton has been passed to Harvey Gershenson. When Harvey volunteered to take the role it was a continuation of Harvey's career in community service. Our membership chairperson position has passed from one set of very capable hands to another, equally capable. Thank you for all your work, Leonard; welcome aboard, Harvey.

Harvey is multitasking. On April 17th he held the first session of a new Special Interest Group (SIG) called "Digital Photography". A camera buff since he was 10 years old, Harvey will focus (pun intended) the SIG on how to get the most out of your personal digital camera. Classroom sessions to help you become familiar with the capabilities of your personal digital camera, coupled with actual indoor and out door photo shoots will get you to taking award winning photographs with every shutter click. The Digital Photography SIG meets on the 3rd Friday of the month. Once you have those great shots, attend the 4th Friday of every month SIG in which photo editing, scanning and slide show productions are the curriculum.

I've had several calls asking for help with Vista, as members purchase new computers with the Vista operating system. The 1st and 2nd Friday SIG's will help acquaint you with Vista and will get you answers to your questions/problems. Vista has not been trouble free. The word "problems" was used deliberately. Microsoft has been testing a new operating system called "Windows 7". It is intended to replace Vista, and rumor has it that "Windows 7" will be available commercially near the end of this year. At the Southwest Computer Conference in San Diego at the end of May there may very well be more definitive information about "Windows 7". Our Club sponsored registration for five members who will be attending the conference. When they return and let us know what they heard and learned we'll have a better handle on Microsoft's operating systems. Our June, September and October meetings will be most interesting.

Our next meeting, May 13th, will be a celebration; a celebration of the Palmia Computer Club world-wide reach. People on every continent use our website to gain invaluable information. If you haven't

EDITORS CORNER

By Nick Nicholson

It is always a pleasure for the club to be able to offer a new service to our members. We are especially proud of the new Special Interest Group on Digital Cameras being offered by Harvey Gersheson. I know from experience how difficult it is to master the intricacies of digital cameras.

I have chosen several articles for this issue that I feel will be of general interest to our members: The Kindle 2 is an “electronic book” offered by Amazon. Due to its convenience and the growing number of titles available through Amazon, this is becoming a very popular item. I also felt that enhanced accessibility for our computers is becoming an important issue with our members. The article on Desktop Zoom evaluates software that may be used to enhance your viewing experience. Also, Microsoft is introducing a new version of Internet Explorer entitled Internet Explorer 8. Having tried the “Beta” version of this update, I am curious to see if they have worked out all of the “bugs.” PS. I would be very hesitant to try a “beta” version of software (or any thing else!) They are often using you to help work out the kinks.



Photography SIG's

What Can You Do With Your Pictures

We have two SIG's devoted to photography; how to take great shots and how to edit and scan them into actual slide shows.

- On Thursday, May 21 the leader of our Photo Editing and Scanning SIG, Don Yenché, will be presenting to the Palmia Genealogy Club a show he made from his edited and scanned pictures,. To produce the show Don used the very same techniques he covers in his SIG. Viewing Don's presentation will demonstrate how easy it is to make interesting productions from the great pictures you learned to take in our Digital Photography SIG. To see Don's wonderful show, contact the Genealogy Club for more information about their May 21 meeting.
- Do you know how to use your digital camera? Do you suffer from fuzzy photographs? Do the pictures appear overly dark or light? Do you understand all the funny little symbols on your camera? Are you satisfied with your pictures after you take them? If any of these issues pertain to you, you need to attend our new SIG (Special Interest Group). Our new Digital Photography SIG meetings discussing these and other topics will be held on the third Friday of every month (except May, July, and August). The location is the Computer Room and the Clubhouse. If your focus is photography, be sure to attend this SIG. Our presenter, Harvey Gersheson is a life long photography hobbyist. He started developing and printing pictures at home when he was 10 years old. Harvey has attended numerous photography seminars and classes. Currently, Harvey is taking 3 Saddleback College Emeritus photography classes.

THE KINDLE 2 MAY MAKE NEWSPAPERS OBSOLETE

BY SANDY BERGER

Every now and then a revolutionary new product comes along at a time when it is most needed. So it is with the just released Kindle2 wireless reading device, fondly called an e-book reader.

Up to now, electronic book readers have been very slow in taking off. Sony has had a book reading device for several years. Last year Amazon came out with the first version of the Kindle, which was impressive and fairly popular, but had a few drawbacks.

Now, however, the time for these devices may have finally come. At 8" x 5.3" the Kindle2 is about the size of a paperback. At about 1/3" thick, it thin but strong. In this second iteration, Amazon has corrected the design flaws of the original Kindle. It is now easy to use. The e-ink technology allows you to read the words on the Kindle just as you would read a book, with no eye strain or glare. You can adjust the size of the text to your liking. To turn the page you simply press a button. The reader even lets you read several books at once, always returning you to just where you left off. You can look up any word with the built-in dictionary. You can underline words and add your own notes to the pages. This Kindle will even read the text of most books to you. So if you are engrossed in a book on the Kindle and need to pick up the kids, you can take the Kindle along and have it read to you in the car.

The best part of the Kindle, however, is the reading material and how it is delivered. The Kindle2 can hold more than 1,500 books. You can choose from over 240,000 books in the Kindle's Amazon store. Most of the books are priced at \$9.99. You can also subscribe to newspapers and magazines on the Kindle. The books, newspapers, and magazines are downloaded directly to the device over a free cellular network. I drove down a rural highway in North Carolina and downloaded a book and was reading it in less than five minutes. Better yet would be sitting on a beach and downloading a romance novel. In any case, the Kindle is ultimately useable. The biggest drawback for the Kindle right now is the price. At \$359, the Kindle is pretty expensive.

But if you are you ready to watch the ebook mar-

ket explode, stick around for awhile. The Kindle2 has appeared on the horizon just as the economy is slumping. There are many hard-hit business sectors, but the newspaper and magazine industry is already showing signs of cracking. CNN reports that many major newspapers are struggling including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Miami Herald. Certainly online versions of newspapers and magazines are an alternative, but up to this point very few newspapers or magazines have been able to support themselves with online subscriptions and/or advertising.

As the print industry is looking for ways to cut costs, ebook readers may be an answer. If there were no print costs, perhaps large newspapers would be able to provide e-book readers to subscribers as part of the subscription costs or at least at a highly reduced rate. If the electronic device were done well enough, it could mimic the printed version and be filled with ads just like the print newspapers and magazines. Normally I would expect that this type of transition would take a few years, but the economic woes may put a rush on this type of move. The Hearst Corp., one of the largest publishers, is already planning to launch its own wireless e-book reader.

Most are speculating that this would be a device with a larger screen that would more closely imitate the newspaper and magazine reading experience. Hearst, who is a mega-publisher, would be in a great position to create the liaisons needed to make this type of device and its content work. Fortune reports that the Hearst device will be available sometime this year.

There is no doubt that we live in a world that is changing because of technology and this type of technology may be in your hands sooner than you think.

DESKTOP ZOOM

BY BONNIE SNYDER

One evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And, I was quite impressed with it. There are those freeware programs that “you get what you pay for,” and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is 3) Entire desktop and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The “Big Mouse” option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don’t get a mouse pointer at all ... not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don’t use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won’t move if you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You’ll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes, the first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected by default in a

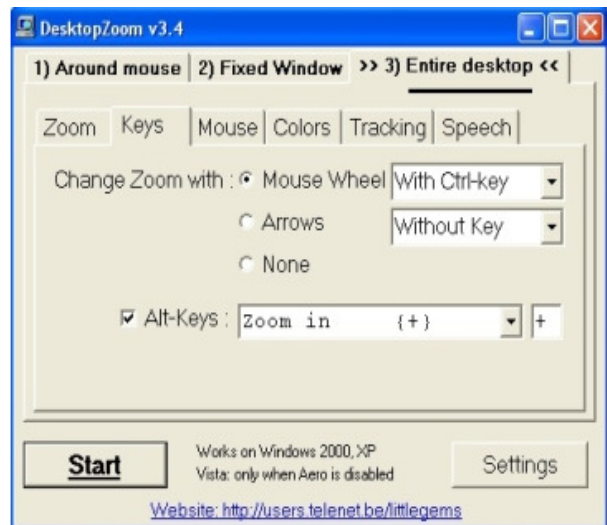
checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair – each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we’ve already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including an option to type in a number of your preference); the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage ... 0 is the default). This one makes me crazy ... what it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of

the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checkbox checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View. The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static – changes when hitting the border and Static – Jump to mouse. The default is Static – changes when hitting the border. You’ll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you’ll be taken to a site for download.



MICROSOFT RELEASES INTERNET EXPLORER 8

BY IRA WILSKER

Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE 8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is "Accelerators" which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is "Web Slices", where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices,

the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE 8 offers a "Smart Address Bar" which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, "Improved Zoom". This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, "In Private" that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, In Private deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers "Automatic Crash Recovery" where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a "SmartScreen Filter" which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users' computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is "domain highlighting" which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website. Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7 .