

# PALMIA COMPUTER CLUB



**July/August 2009**

**Next Meeting**

**July 8, 2009**

**Windows 7 & Internet Games**

*Our July meeting will introduce you to Windows 7, the latest edition of Microsoft's Windows Operating System as well as to the World of Internet Games*

## USER FRIENDLY

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**Vice-President: Nick Nicholson**  
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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.

**Managing Editor: Nick Nicholson**  
**Editorial Staff: Eva Schmidler**

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 Lebovitz.*

#### **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](mailto: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.

#### **We need you**

**Get active with the computer club. We are always seeking members who would like to contribute their time and expertise. Please feel free to attend a meeting of our board and learn more about the opportunities to participate. Board meetings are held in the Clubhouse Conference room on the first Wednesday of every month.**

# Presidents Letter

By Shelly Stern

Bill Gates - no need to worry- yet. I'm not quite ready to run Microsoft. Perhaps a more realistic lead for this article is "Why I need the Palmia Computer Club", or better yet, "Why YOU Need the Palmia Computer Club".

Like all of us, computers came into my home somewhere in the second half of life. It started with an Epson, CPM computer eventually converted with software to be able to use "IBM DOS" developed programs. From there a succession of always more powerful, but smaller, machines kept replacing each other in order for me to keep up with "what's new; what's faster' what's better". And through these "upgrades", which is what we learned to call them, I added programs, deleted programs, played with desktop icons, got onto the internet, constructed a favorites list, compared prices, made purchases, and even used the computer to get an RMA (returned merchandise authorization) after making a poor choice with on-line shopping. I even made a spreadsheet to track insurance costs over the years, and on-line banking is just "so cool". But most of all, I learned how important it was to have phone numbers of someone to help me get out of trouble. It's probably not possible to count the number of times I used one of the numbers to say something such as "----I didn't do anything, but "---(choose one) a) the computer won't start; b) I can't get on the internet; c) the program disappeared; d) the computer is so slow, d) I'm not getting email messages, e), f), g), etc.

But I'm still willing to try doing "computer stuff" myself. So, recently, because I was told "it's cool", I downloaded - I know what that means- a free program to keep my computer fast, healthy, free from bad stuff. The program has a listing of all kinds of things under one tab called "Applications" and an even longer list under another tab. I want a fast, healthy, uncluttered computer so I told the program to do its thing. Where did my favorites go? What happened to my stored passwords which were supposed to be securely protected? That's where the number of a "helper"- a Palmia Computer Club member was so important in bringing the machine back from its state of suspended animation.

Still more. Because I'm so good at downloading and staying current with the latest and greatest, I downloaded Internet Explorer 8 (IE8 to us techies). So many "cool" new features. I think they're called add-ons. So cool in fact, that when I tried to log on to Sam's Club I ended up with 32 "A!Roboform" messages, all on one screen, one on top of the other. Nice geometric design. Sam's Club robot (if that's what it was) didn't like me. I needed the Task Manager (one of the Computer Club phone numbers told me what to do) to tell Roboform to stop. So, I accessed Microcenter to look for something. A!Roboform followed me! No access to the website but lots of messages stacked up, one on top of the other. How did "the robot" get into my computer? Can we get rid of it? Is the upgrade to IE8 the culprit? Help! Palmia Computer Club to the rescue! Maybe next time. at a meeting or at a SIG, I should ask Club members for advice or help before trying to add, subtract, enhance.

So, Bill Gates, unless you bring on Palmia Computer Club members as your advisory committee, you're on your own. Good luck with Microsoft. Those of us wise enough to be members of the Palmia Computer Club have our own talented, capable advisors to keep us up with the technology curve in this, the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And all that expertise comes with an annual membership of only \$20, and less for a family membership. Bill Gates, you charge almost twice as much for each call to your help line, and then you make us wait for half-an-hour before someone in a land far, far away says "can I help you?" Our "may we help you" comes in person, is faster, less expensive and is just as capable. Maybe you should join our Palmia Computer Club.

## Editor's Corner

By Nick Nicholson

I am really looking forward to our upcoming meeting on July 8th. The new Windows 7 Operating System has been the subject of much discussion recently. It was first issued in "Beta" version. Frankly, I am wary of Beta versions of any software. This goes double with stuff from Microsoft. Now Microsoft calls it "RC1" (Release Candidate 1) meaning it's almost ready for a full release. I am sure that all members will appreciate the opportunity to learn about the new OS. See you at the meeting!

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### WINDOWS 7 and XP

*Many of us are using XP as our operating. A concern, of course, is what will happen to our XP as Microsoft focuses its attention on Windows 7. Printed below is an excerpt from an April 19, 2009 review by PC Advisor.*

"Windows 7 Release Candidate 1 (RC1) is a polished piece of work, ready for prime time. This hotly anticipated version arrives with a variety of nifty new changes to the interface and some important refinements under the hood. Most of the changes in Windows 7 RC1 are not earth-shaking, but in general the operating system has been tweaked in numerous small ways to **improve productivity** and overall usefulness.

#### **Windows 7 RC1: Windows XP Mode**

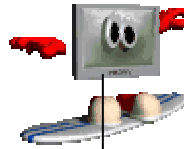
Perhaps the biggest surprise - and for **Microsoft**, possibly the biggest boost - is a feature that has been announced but not yet available: **Windows XP Mode**, which will run XP applications in an XP compatibility box, but make them appear as if they are running directly in Windows 7 itself. In this way, **Microsoft** hopes to give users the best of both worlds - the compatibility of XP and the shinier new **Windows 7** interface.

The feature sounds underwhelming until you dig into the details. According to Microsoft, you won't actually have to manually run Virtual PC to run those XP applications once you've installed them; instead, they will appear to work directly within Windows 7.

You'll just have to run Virtual PC the first time and run the application - from that point on, it will appear to be just other application running directly in Windows 7 (at least, that's the promise). And you won't have to buy XP separately - your Windows 7 EULA (end-user license agreement) includes XP as well. In essence, you get two **operating systems** for the price of one.

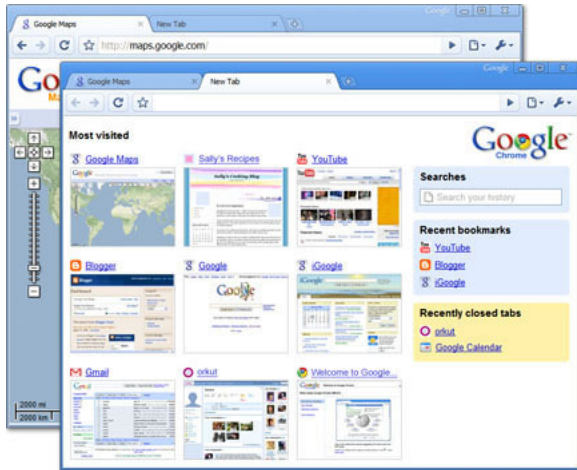
This solves one of Microsoft's biggest problems with XP very cleverly - it's such a solid, stable operating system that people simply don't want to give it up to move to a newer operating system. Now they don't have to - they can run XP as if it were a part of Windows 7."

Microsoft says Windows XP Mode will soon be ready for download, and as soon as it is, we will try to gather reviews to report on how well it works.



## A New Web Browser

Google has joined the fray to compete with Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox in the web browser market. Google Chrome is a browser that combines a minimal design with sophisticated technology claimed to make the web faster, safer, and easier.



You can download and install this free software from <http://www.google.com/chrome>.

## A New Search Engine

With Google claiming over 80% of the searches being performed on the World Wide Web, Microsoft has decided to once again join the competition with a new search engine called BING.



It's been stated that just 1% of the search engine business can bring in close to \$1,000,000,000/year in ad revenue, so it's understandable why competition is heating up. Jump to [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com) to see what you think. There has been a lot of discussion about why the name BING, it has nothing to do with Mr. Crosby and was probably chosen because it was simple and easy to remember. However, one possibility still exists that BING stands for But It's Not Google<g>.

## A Search Tool Of A Different Flavor

Stephen Wolfram is a distinguished scientist, inventor, author, and business leader. Born in London in 1959, Wolfram was educated at Eton, Oxford, and Caltech. He published his first scientific paper at the age of 15, and had received his PhD in theoretical physics from Caltech by the age of 20. Wolfram's early scientific work was mainly in high-energy physics, quantum field theory, and cosmology, and included several now-classic results. Having started to use computers in 1973, Wolfram rapidly became a leader in the emerging field of scientific computing, and in 1979 he began the construction of SMP – the first modern computer algebra system – which he released commercially in 1981. On 18 May Dr. Wolfram has released [www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com). A natural language-based search tool which claims to offer an alternative approach to Google - "is to make all systematic knowledge immediately computable and accessible to everyone.

	Ford	General Motors
market cap	\$17.76 billion	\$37.5 billion
revenue	\$127.5 billion	\$128.5 billion
employees	60,000	243,000
revenue / employee	\$1,821 million	\$571,600
net income	-\$16.16 billion	-\$35.51 billion
shares outstanding	2.873 billion	610.5 million
annual earnings / share	\$0.51	\$86.45
P/E ratio		\$1.00
annual dividends / share		\$1.00
dividend yield		13.02%

Try entering something like your date of birth or first name and you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Don't forget that if you have any questions or comments about these sites, don't hesitate to send me an email at [jerryamoore@cox.net](mailto:jerryamoore@cox.net). Until next issue - happy and safe surfing!

## COMPUTER CLUB MEMBERS ATTEND CONFERENCE



A delegation of Palmia Computer Club members recently attended the Southwest Computer Conference in San Diego. This is an annual conference for the leaders and membership of local computer clubs. A number of vendors and service providers sponsor the conference at which they display the latest in computer products and services. Workshops are also held on a number of computer topics.

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### **Antivirus & Antispyware Software Do You Get What You Pay For?**

**(From an article by Marty Sems in the June 19 issue of First Glimpse)**

Round-the-clock protection: It's essential for a Windows PC in today's world. If you own a PC and you run Windows, you need security software with antivirus and antispyware capabilities.

Remarkably for such a lucrative market—households typically pay \$50 or more per year to subscribe to the most recent virus definition updates—there are several capable freebies in the antivirus/antispyware genre. And yet, if all you use is free software, can you really consider your PC safe? And if the unthinkable happens and your computer catches an infection, will there be anyone you can call for help?

In most cases, free editions of antivirus and antispyware utilities offer less protection than their vendors' pay versions. Their purpose is to get users comfortable with their brands so when it's time to upgrade to more comprehensive security measures, people will buy the software that's most familiar to them.

One key difference between free and pay versions is that the gratis editions lack phone-in tech support. Some free software doesn't automatically update itself, instead requiring you to manually click an update button when you remember to. In addition, a few free editions only detect malware and won't remove it. Some free offerings lack real-time shields that keep your system from becoming infected. Instead, all you get is a scanning and removal tool, which, in certain cases, isn't enough to return your PC to normal and recover all of your personal data unaltered.

There are Internet security suites for which you pay. These usually add a firewall and antispam capabilities to the typical gamut of antivirus/antispyware. Suites offer utilities that are made to complement each other without conflict. They can also save you money over buying individual security apps piecemeal.

Strong protection is even more important if you are a novice user buying antivirus/antispyware. Beginners aren't as wary about opening email attachments or spotting fake security pop-ups, so chances are that free software won't entirely cover your needs. Besides, if a problem does crop up, a paid subscription will give you someone to call for tech support.

## TRY OUT TWITTER

We hear about politicians who use Twitter, celebrities who use Twitter, and maybe more than a few friends. What's the big deal?

Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) is a simple tool. You type a description of what you are up to, right at that moment, using 140 characters or less. Twitter sends that information to all of your friends, family, and co-workers who sign up to follow your updates. (They generally see your Twitters on a special Web page.) This bare-bones idea seems to have captured the imagination of the Internet.

Twitter relies on cell phones for much of its spontaneity. That's where the 140-character rule comes from—it's close to the typical mobile phone text message limit. You can send your "tweets" to Twitter via text messaging on your cell phone or by filling in a form at the Twitter Web page. Third-party sites can also feed Twitter by email.

The goal is to make it easy for you to update your Twitter status anywhere, anytime. You've never been so well-informed about what your friends do all day. What's more, you can get those updates wherever you go. You can view other users' updates via text messages that are delivered to your phone; you can read them at the Twitter Web site; or you can view them through a variety of other applications. Not all users update constantly about mundane goings-on. Some users send out periodic witticisms or use Twitter as a short-form entertaining blog. Many people don't understand the point of Twitter, and that's OK. It probably depends on whether other people you know use Twitter. It can be a fun way to keep in touch with a close-knit bunch of family members or friends.

Try out Twitter for yourself by heading to the site and clicking the Get Started Now button to sign up. Enter your name and email address and choose a user ID and password. The next page will search Twitter for the contacts stored in your email account, if you are comfortable with handing your email password over to Twitter. If not, you can skip that step and locate friends one at a time.

Next, the site suggests some actual Twitter users you could begin following (automatically receiving tweets from them) to get in to the swing of things. Often, these are famous folks you probably do not know personally.

Just as you can follow other Twitter users, celebrity or otherwise, Twitter users can become your followers. Generally, you only see tweets from people you follow, and only your own followers see what you send. To start following friends, click Find People near the top of the Twitter page. Here, you can locate people already on Twitter or send emails inviting others to try Twitter.

Once you're set up, go to the main page and type out your first update. Even if you don't have any followers, it will show up on the Everyone tab along with, well, everyone else's tweets.

Along with the standard tweet blasts, Twitter lets you send other types of messages. You can send a reply to someone by beginning your message with "@username," where "username" is a Twitter ID. Maybe your friend Bob sent out a tweet complaining about the rain. You might respond with "@bob I agree!" Your message can be read by all of your followers, and it will show up on Bob's main page, as well as his @replies tab. You can send @replies to someone who does not follow you.

A more private type of communication is the direct message. Start a message using the format "d+space+username" (for example: "d bob where are you?"), and only that user will be able to see the message. Unlike @replies, you can send direct messages only to your followers.

Twitter is popular enough that it attracts some spam-like posts. We added some of Twitter's suggested users to our lineup and quickly found ourselves "followed" by several advertisers. You can protect your tweets by requiring your approval before anyone is allowed to follow you. Just click the Settings link and look toward the bottom of the Account tab for the checkbox. It's a good way to keep track of who's keeping track of you.

By Alan Phelps

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## Tech Motivators

### Gear That Gets You Going

I will eat healthier. I will exercise more. I will feel better. This has been my New Year's resolution for the past five years, and I know I'm not alone. Every January, I see new members joining my gym, and for the first few months, it's hard to find an open treadmill. By May, the crowd thins out, and yoga class attendance is down. I am as guilty as the rest of them.

I have one major distraction when it comes to reaching my fitness goals: I simply get bored. Excuses, excuses. But, I need to mix up my routine to stay interested. So, I've started integrating tech devices into some of my workouts. iPod tunes certainly help jumpstart my workout sessions, but I've found other fun ways that inspire during that last lap. If you, too, need a little motivation, here are a few ideas that might help give you that extra push.

**ThinQ.** If you enjoy walking, a pedometer really motivates you to take those extra steps. Each pedometer is a little different in the way you wear it and the information it measures, but all are designed to track steps and distance. I like Sportline's ThinQ (\$29.99; [www.sportline.com](http://www.sportline.com)). About the size of a credit card, it's designed to fit in your pocket rather than clip to your waistband. I like this concept because I know it's there, but no one else does. The ThinQ tracks steps, distance, and calories burned. If you've never worn one, I encourage you to try a pedometer — you might be surprised at the number of miles you're putting on every day.

**Nike + iPod.** I'm counting on the Nike + iPod Sport Kit (\$29; [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)) to help me complete my first half-marathon this spring — and so far, I'm not disappointed. Compatible with all iPod nanos and the iPod touch (second generation), the kit includes a sensor that you place in the sole of a Nike + shoe (shoes sold separately). The sensor communicates with a receiver attached to your nano (the 2G iPod touch has built-in support, so no receiver is needed). You select from a list of workouts and receive audible feedback of your distance, pace, time, and calories burned. Once a workout is completed, you connect your

nano or touch to your computer, which will sync with iTunes and send your workout information to NikePlus.com where you create an account to set your goals and track your progress. Overall, this kit is a great motivator; plus, it's a great excuse to buy a new pair of kicks.

**Wii Fit.** My roommate is the proud owner of a Nintendo Wii (\$250; [www.nintendo.com](http://www.nintendo.com)), and Wii Fit (\$89.99) was one of the first accessories we agreed to add. Wii Fit includes a wireless balance board on which you perform exercises, and there are more than 40 activities to choose from. It features four training modes: yoga, strength, aerobics, and balance. To begin, you create a virtual character and take the Body Test to measure your body's performance level. You can then log your workouts and chart your progress. Those who have never tried it might falsely label Wii Fit as just another game, but it's a fun way for people of all ages, including families, to work toward healthy lifestyles.

**Web sites.** I've come across a few Web sites that offer handy tools to set goals and track progress, personalize diet plans, view workout demos, and connect with others who share similar goals. Here are a few on my Favorites list: SparkPeople ([www.sparkpeople.com](http://www.sparkpeople.com)), Gyminee ([www.gyminee.com](http://www.gyminee.com)), American Heart Association ([www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)), and traineo ([www.traineo.com](http://www.traineo.com)). And, if you own an Apple iPhone, it's worth looking into some of the many health and fitness apps available from the Apple App Store ([www.apple.com/iphone/appstore](http://www.apple.com/iphone/appstore)).

These fitness tools have elevated the intensity level of my workouts and boosted my self-improvement goals, but my collection just barely scratches the surface. With the help of this gear, maybe next year my resolution will finally change. I wonder if there's a tech gadget to help with compulsive shopping habits.

*Linné Ourada*

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