

PALMIA COMPUTER CLUB



November/December 2009

Next Meeting

November 11th Year End Social.

Come enjoy socializing, fun, refreshments and even some education at our year end event.

USER FRIENDLY

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Vice-President: Nick Nicholson
Secretary: Jerry Moore
Treasurer: Bob Ruben
Webmaster: Jerry Moore

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/Vista.....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

Nick Nicholson, Vice President - npierce@palmia.com

Jerry Moore, Secretary - jerryamoore@cox.net

Bob Ruben, Treasurer - bobaud@cox.net

Jerry Moore, Webmaster - jerryamoore@cox.net

Barry Robbins, Past President - pcc_pres@cox.net

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

Our year-end event is coming. At the November 11th event we plan to mix some education in with the fun we always have at the last meeting of the year. In addition to raffle prizes (thank you Barry and Roz Robbins for being our shoppers) we will have an "enhanced" dessert table. Come for the "education" and the prizes and the sweet table will be a bonus. You may even be surprised to see yourself in one of the "educational" videos. There is an admission charge of \$2.00 for members and guests; guests are specifically invited.

As mentioned at the October meeting, all members of the Board of Directors have agreed to continue in office for one more year. While this will assure continuity of programming, it begs the question of additional members coming forth to help guide the club. Technology with which we work is continually changing. The same "old people" (not referring to age) doing the "same old programming" is not what the club is all about. We welcome new ideas, suggestions for additional targets of emphasis, and most important of all, new people at board meetings. The board meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Conference Room. Come to a meeting, share your ideas, help us continue to help the entire Palmia community.

For many years we have been helping the community by providing and maintaining a computer lab. Most of the equipment has been donated to the club. Much of the equipment now needs replacement. We can use new donations to replace the aging CPU's and monitors. When you get your new computer this holiday season, consider donating the old setup to the Computer Club. Contact Barry Robbins or myself and let us know what equipment you have to donate. If it is something we can use in the lab, we'll make arrangements to help you clean out all of your personal files from the "old" equipment. You will get a form showing you donated equipment to a tax-exempt organization, a possible income tax deduction for you. As you update your set-up we welcome the opportunity to have you help update the Club's lab.

To all members of the Palmia Computer Club and their families we wish a healthy, safe and enjoyable holiday season. Let's look forward to a new and exciting 2010 for our Computer Club.

Editor's Corner

By Nick Nicholson

Two great articles have recently been published that I would like to share with you. The first concerns free software that assists caregivers. The second concerns maintaining and "decluttering" your desktop. Enjoy

Free Software Helps Caregivers

Written by Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, Fort Collins, CO
kByte™ Newsletter, June 2009.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author. An article with the title "Caring for the Caregiver" appeared in the in the November/December 2007 issue of AARP magazine¹. Here is an extract from that article:

"A cascade of studies in recent years has shown that caregivers stand at particular risk for a host of mental and physical illnesses, many of which have roots in stress, exhaustion, and self-neglect—symptoms some medical professionals have begun calling caregiver syndrome. . . . According to a 2004 national survey by AARP and The National Alliance for Caregiving, nearly 23 million households are currently home to a caregiver, most often a woman who is taking care of someone 50 or older. Some 43 percent of these caregivers are over 50 themselves—13 percent are over 65—and they spend good chunks of their weeks on a heady range of chores, from medication management and bathing to feeding, clothing, and arranging health care services. . . . Unfortunately for many friends and family members of caregivers, it is difficult to know when to step in—or what to do...."

I recommend this article to all caregivers, and to friends and family members of caregivers. Yes, it is difficult for friends and family members of caregivers to know what to do. It can also be overwhelming for a caregiver to add another task—coordinating help from those friends and family members—to an already burdensome schedule.

Both caregivers and those willing to help may find a scheduling solution with a web site called www.Lotsa Helping Hands.com. This web site allows a caregiver or family member to:

"Create a free of charge, private, web-based community to organize family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues – a family's 'circles of community' — during times of need. . . ."

There are three primary templates:

1. Caregiving
2. Eldercare and Long Term Care
3. Military and Veterans Families

There are four additional templates:

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1. Volunteering
2. Parenting
3. Schools
4. Religious Groups

These templates allow one person to coordinate the activities of others by identifying the needs and allowing volunteers to accept tasks. All of this activity takes place online, relieving the caregiver of the burden of many phone calls and separate schedules. For those familiar with Google Documents™, there is a slight similarity between the two. However, the Lotsa Helping Hands templates are designed specifically for caregiving situations:

“Each community includes an intuitive group calendar for scheduling tasks such as meals delivery and rides, a platform for securely sharing vital medical, financial, and legal information with designated family members, and customizable sections for posting photos, well wishes, blogs, journals, and messages.

Now, when someone asks ‘what can I do to help?’ the answer is ‘give me your name and email address’ – the system takes over and allows people to sign up and start helping.”

A web based service such as Lotsa Helping Hands is certain to generate questions about privacy and security. You will find answers to these questions in the “Terms of use” page of the web site. Included in the Terms are descriptions of the data security, data integrity and access (among other) protections.

[Note: The scheduling features are not dependent upon the use of private information. It is not necessary to include medical, financial or legal information on the web site—although that information is protected].

Lotsa Helping Hands has many non-profit partners, including the Alzheimer’s Association, the Family Caregiver Alliance, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and many more. Check the Partners page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site for more information.

You can read what national media, such as Business Week, NY Times and others have to say about Lotsa Helping Hands by clicking on the links on the Media page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site.

I have not personally used this service, although there was a time, not so long ago, when I would have used it had I known about it. After reading the description of the service, and the “How It Works” section of the web site, I am convinced that the service is, indeed, very valuable and also secure. I recommend that caregivers try this service. There is at least the potential to reduce your levels of stress and exhaustion associated with your role of caregiver.

1. Crute, Sherre, “Caring for the Caregiver.” AARP Magazine, November and December, 2007

Clean Up Your Room/Desktop - Part I

Written by Ron Hirsch, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL

So, does that line ring any bells? If you're a youngster, you've heard your elders tell you to clean up your room very often. And if you're not a youngster, then you use the line yourself on your kids or grandchildren. Well, I have no young kids around anymore, but I often use that line (with a slight change.) I'm constantly telling people to "Clean up your desktop," with "desktop" being their computer screen after the machine has booted up, and before any programs are run.

There are some desktop differences between the different Windows versions. And, some companies such as Dell and Compaq very often install a "special" arrangement on the desktop, mostly to keep their name in front of you. Also, there are programs which generate their own desktop arrangement. But, they all generally respond to the procedures presented below. Once you become an expert in this area, you'll have no problems with the finer points and variations.

Since most of you are using Windows XP, and since I use XP on all my machines, all the activities discussed are based on XP. I have not used Vista, but I would assume it's the same there. One thing I do remember however, is that in Windows 95, desktop icons did not automatically line up in rows and columns. In XP, when you move an icon, it automatically snaps to the nearest position which keeps the rows and columns aligned.

The average computer user, even those who should know better, generally have disaster zones for the desktops. There are icons all over the place, not in any order and not lined up. And, there are many, that when I ask what they are, I'm told "I don't know." And, when I ask to have Windows Explorer or Notepad opened, there's usually a lot of scrambling, to find out where the icon is located.

Many programs, when installed, will place an icon on your desktop. Sometimes they ask you during the install if you want this - and sometimes they don't ask. There is always a tendency for software companies to grab real estate so that they can prominently keep themselves in front of you. Some newer computers running Windows XP/VISTA may even start off with almost nothing on the desktop. If you want to go back to a more conventional appearing desktop, right click on the desktop, and view the various options you have. There is probably a choice to revert to an "old-fashioned" desktop, which I personally prefer. Most people keep their medications in a medicine cabinet, canned goods in the pantry, garden tools in the garage, etc. But when it comes to their computer, they are as disorganized as is humanly possible. They feel intimidated by their computers, and don't wish to antagonize it. So, the thrust of this article is to go back to real basics again, and give you some information on organizing and cleaning up your desktop. If you're already super organized, you can skip this article, accept my apologies. and move on. But 99 out of 100 of you probably don't qualify to get the gold star for desktop organization. Once you do the tasks presented, you'll probably wonder why you didn't do it sooner. It not only is much easier to work with a good functional desktop, it looks prettier also, and will impress those who see it.

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WHY HAVE ICONS ON THE DESKTOP?

Most users are familiar with the primary way to run a program. Click on START>PROGRAMS, and one can navigate to all the programs that are installed on the machine. But, most users generally have several programs that they use often. Having an icon for these programs on the desktop makes it easier to access that program. Just double click on that icon, and the program opens.

WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

Let's take an extreme analogy. How would you like to have a dictionary where the words were randomly listed, not in any order? It would take lots of time to look up a word. By organizing things, and getting important icons at your fingertips, you can make your life much easier. And, your friends will be asking you to help them, when they see your desktop. Consider the desktop as a presentation area for icons that you often use. Count the icons on your desktop that you really use, and those you don't use. Then list the icons that you use which are not readily available on the desktop and you have to do lots of clicking to reach. You will see why it's a good idea to improve things. Now let's get down to business and fix things up.

OPERATING ON ICONS

The following activities are easy to perform on icons, wherever they may be. There are a few icons that Microsoft does put in places where they take control away from you - you can't readily rename them, or move them off the desktop, although you can always reposition them on the desktop. You may discover some of these in your travels. When you do, you'll just have to skip those icons. While they can be operated on using special protocols, that's outside of the scope of activities for these lessons.

WHAT IS AN ICON

An icon is a representation of a program, or file, or just about anything you want. The icons on your desktop are usually shortcuts to running a program, be it a word processor, spreadsheet, Internet connection, etc. All icons have properties, which define the nature of the icon, and details of what it does when used. Right clicking on an icon will bring up a window with the bottom item in the list being "properties." Left click on "properties," and you'll get a window with lots of information about the icon. Try it, and browse around to get a feel for things. The more familiar you become with things on your computer, the more comfortable you'll feel using them.

MOVE AN ICON

Left click on and drag an icon and you can move it manually anywhere you want on your desktop, or into another open folder. The ability to drag an icon around is tied into the choice that was made on how icons are positioned. Before you can engage in changing locations et al on your desktop, you must first check to see how things are set. Right click on the desktop and in XP you will bring up a small box with a list of items in it. The contents of this box will vary, depending upon which version of Windows you are using. The top item is "arrange icons by," and it has a little arrowhead to the left. Click on that arrowhead, and you'll see a variety of items related to arranging

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icons. Some of these may be checked. The best way to learn what does what is to play around with the checking and unchecking. After a few trials, you will get a good feel for what they all do.

COPY AN ICON

Copying an icon is similar to moving an icon. As with the standard Windows protocol, do exactly as you would to move, but hold down the CTRL key while you are doing the click and drag operation

If you copy it into the same area, you'll probably see a (2) following the text in the copy. You can't have two icons in the same place, with the same name. So, Windows adds the "(2)" for you. If you move it to another folder, the "(2)" will stay, but you can edit the text as you'd like. See "Rename an Icon" below. Dragging an icon to any folder on your desktop will move the icon into that folder.

DELETE AN ICON

Click once on an icon to highlight it, and then hit the Delete key. Remember, the icons here are generally shortcut icons with the little curly arrow on the lower left corner. Deleting these does not delete anything from your system except the shortcut icon. No programs or data will be deleted, just the icon.

RENAME AN ICON

Click once an icon and then hit the F2 key. This puts you in "edit" mode, and you can type a new name by using the keyboard. If you type in a very long name, all the text you entered may not display when the icon is not selected. But, when you click once on the icon, the extra lines of text should be visible. In general, try to keep the text to a maximum of two lines under the icon. Remember the F2 key. It is the "edit" key for folder names, filenames, icons, and other elements in Windows.

Next month, we'll continue from this point to get a more streamlined desktop for you to work with. But, you must know the various icon manipulation procedures presented above. I won't be repeating the explanation for each step. I'll just say delete, copy, move, (etc.) the icon. So if you've forgotten how to do it, you'll need a copy of this article handy to remind you.

Remember, you will learn by experimenting and exploring - so don't be afraid to do so. If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brscs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose leaf notebook for future reference.

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