

# McHenry County Computer Club

*Users Group for PC-Compatible Systems*



*March 2009*  
*Volume 26 No. 3*

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The **March 2009** meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is **March 14**, at the Salvation Army Building, 290 W. Crystal Lake Ave., in Crystal Lake. Enter the building at the parking level double door under the awning. The treasurer will be there by 8:30 AM for Club financial transactions.

#### Membership

Our membership is \$26.00 a year. NOTE: This fee offsets the running of the club; membership benefits include help with computer problems. Please pay Lyle Giese, our treasurer, or the designated Board Member in his absence.

Meetings : 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

#### Meeting Agenda

09:00 General Business Meeting

09:15 Break

09:30 Photoshop Elements

10:45 Q&A

The Newsletter is published monthly by McHenry County Computer Club, online.

Editor-in-Chief: Lucë York

Direct inquiries, comments, articles to the Editor to Lucë at [info@Mc3ComputerClub.org](mailto:info@Mc3ComputerClub.org)

Please indicate that your email is for the editor.

Direct technical questions to MC3 at: [info@Mc3ComputerClub.org](mailto:info@Mc3ComputerClub.org)

MC3 website: <http://www.mc3computerclub.org/>

## *upcoming demos*

*April*            WORD 2003 (tentative) – Bob Wagner

*May*             Ghost (tentative) - Lyle Giese

*June*            Excel – Jack Luff

### MC<sup>3</sup> OFFICIALS

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Past President : John Katkus

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Board Members : Jack Luff ; Dave Lutes ; Jim Bierle ; Bruce Eckersberg

## Questions & Answers

Q: When looking at your email in Mozilla, how can you make your message full screen without all the ads & commercials?

A: When using webmail, you are always at the mercy of the company providing the email service. Using a mail program, Outlook Express, Thunderbird, SeaMonkey, etc., you then control the size and won't have the banner ads.

Q: I am using Adobe Reader V9. All of a sudden I cannot open a .PDF file in mail (VISTA).

A: Uninstall Adobe reader and re-install. If that does not work, use FoxIT instead <http://www.foxitsoftware.com>. It's a free workalike for acrobat reader.

Q: "Fatal Error"? is this Recoverable - New Hard Drive?

A: Fatal Error is very generic in this situation. What type of Hard Drive? PATA (older 'standard' IDE drive) or SATA? Bad cable? Bad jumper/options setting (cable select/Master/Slave [this is important on the older PATA or standard IDE drive])? Are you putting this drive in as a second drive or to replace the existing drive? It's possible that the two drives you have just don't like each other or the jumper settings conflict with the settings on the other drive. The possibilities tend to go and on and the answers depend on some of the technical specs I mentioned.

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## Adventures of Teaching Seniors Basic PC Computers

*by Frank a McGurn*

About four or five years ago I was asked and talked into teaching a class for Senior Citizens (over 55) at McHenry Township Senior Center. I agreed to teach about PC Windows, for beginners only. I'm not a teacher. I did a lot of training classes for fire fighters on Automatic Sprinklers all over the Midwest when I worked for National Fire Sprinkler Association. I taught at

Harper and College of Lake County for one semester at each, but I decided I didn't like teaching a whole semester. Being a speaker for a seminar is not really teaching, and I was on many seminars.

So I decided that I could teach two hours, three days a week and enjoy doing something productive. You never know who the students are and what they know. We have 6 computers that are loaded with programs that can be taught by our teachers. Included are MS Works Suite, Excel, Photo Shop, 2 greeting card programs, Nero and others.

The first question I ask the class is, "What do you know about computers?" Most of the time the answer is nothing or have used a computer at work years ago. Second question is, "Do you have a computer at home?" The answers, of course run, from "No, but if I can learn how to use it I'll buy one," to "My wife (or husband, child, grandchild) has a computer." Next question, "Can you use the computer?" They aren't all really sure. The worst students are those who take the beginners class but have some knowledge, can get on the Internet and use e-mail. *[Editor's note: Ask Frank why these are the worst students.]* The classes run from no knowledge to a little.

A husband and wife team may take the class because the wife is an expert and wants to make sure her husband learns the computer. In this situation, the wife takes over teaching the husband, and sometimes on a different topic from the one I'm teaching, thus confusing the class. I asked my daughter, who has been a teacher for over 25 years, how should I handle that situation; her advice: teach what you're suppose to teach. So I now tell those who go off my subject, that I'm the teacher. It works.

I found a program online that is just what I needed. It is written by college professors for teachers of children in the primary grades. To start, I go through basic definitions of computer jargon like Boot up, bits and bytes, Desktop, Laptop, operating system, Ram, hard drive, and the like.

My program starts with the mouse: how to hold it, using it, and changing it for left handed students. In 4 years I have only changed a mouse for 2 left-handed students. One student couldn't use the mouse, so for the next class she brought her external touch pad. Some older students have very shaky hands, so I have them practice by playing solitaire. It's great for dragging and dropping.

The program teaches the desktop, all parts of a window, including the Title bar drop down menus, tool bars and the bottom tool bar. I spend time teaching about "Help" and how to use it. We cover the Start Menu, All Programs, Built –in Components, Saving a Document and Getting the Most Out of the Keyboard. And if I have time, I teach a little on e-mail.

The keyboard is becoming a little difficult with more students owning laptops. I teach what I consider the standard 101 keyboard. It would make my life better if all brands of laptops had a standard keyboard arrangement. Very few have the numeric key pad, but some keys can be converted to be like the numeric pad. That is hard to explain. My laptop has the "delete" key on the bottom row next to the insert key that is on the right of the space bar. A new Dell has the Delete key on the top row, last key. The "Fn" key is one that gets them. My laptop has one "Start" key on the top row - One Control key bottom row left end, that is where it belongs. But there is only one. There are other variations, so it's just a matter of each person getting used to whichever keyboard comes with his/her computer or laptop.

A lot of time is spent showing how to close drop down menus and other function pop ups that were opened by mistake and clearing inactive files or programs off the bottom tool bar because the student keeps clicking the mouse and the program opens up several times. Getting the number of clicks of the mouse and when to use the right button or the left button is confusing to the senior student.

Every class is different. In one I had 2 men, each 91 years-old; both were very sharp. One was from India but had no computer experience. He said his children told him he could go back to India and be a Tech for HP or Dell. My students have ranged from a funeral director to a woman, in her 60's, a scuba diver who swims with whales and is may just be at this time off the coast of Central America , swimming with whales. I had 3 retired airline pilots, one aeronautical engineer who designed airplanes using a computer, but had no idea about windows or E-mail or the internet. One preacher was a challenge: she took my class 3 times and never finished. I see her around McHenry when she is collecting for her food Pantry in her church. Most students are well over 60 and are grandmothers or grandfathers who want to send E-mail to family and friends out of town or overseas.

All and all, it is very rewarding and I have met many very nice people.



## Attacks & Active Exploits

*(reprinted from SANS NewBites)*

Koobface Variant Spreading Through Social Networking Sites (March 2, 2009)

A variant of the Koobface worm has been spreading through social networking communities such as Facebook and MySpace. The malware spreads by sending messages that appear to come from friends, asking them to click on a link to watch a video. When the users reach the malicious website, they receive a message that they need to install an Adobe Flash plug-in to view the clip properly. If they agree to install the plug-in, a Trojan horse program is installed on the computer instead, giving attackers control over the machine. This Koobface variant also sends out invitations to watch the bogus clip to contacts through the social networking account. In addition, two rogue Facebook applications have been attempting to steal user data.

[http://voices.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2009/03/koobface\\_worm\\_resurfaces\\_on\\_fa.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2009/03/koobface_worm_resurfaces_on_fa.html)

*Contributed by Lyle Giese*

## eBoostr Update

First of all, I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has tried the eBoostr program that I wrote about in the January newsletter (ReadyBoost For Windows XP). I am continuing to use the program with success.

As I mentioned previously, I became interested in eBoostr as part of my efforts to continue to get use out of an older laptop. One of the things I had done was add four USB 2.0 ports via a PC Card to this computer. Therein lies a tale.

I had setup eBoostr on this computer to use one of my fastest flash drives (from my demo of November, 2007). eBoostr does present some access time information and it was clear that I was not getting nearly the speed from that flash drive that I had presented in the demo. For the demo, I had done the testing on my high end laptop with included USB 2.0 ports I repeated the test on this laptop with the PC Card. What had been a speed of 26 MB/sec was now a speed of 8 MB/sec.

Having less of a response on an older, slower computer with the PC Card interface was not unexpected, but this seemed like a lot of a difference. I had another PC Card available and decided to try it. The speed now was 16 MB/sec. I was very surprised that two devices that supposedly did the same thing should have such different results. The faster card is by Micro Innovations and the slower card is by SIIG, Inc.

I have not done any specific speed tests with and without eBoostr, but in working with the two PC Cards, I had a few opportunities to observe these effects. It was clear that the computer booted much faster with eBoostr, the flash drive and the faster PC card installed, close to twice as fast. This certainly made the program worthwhile.

The eBoostr web site recommends an eBoostr cache of 1 or 2 gigabytes. However, larger caches are possible and, with the prices of flash drives dropping so quickly, are to be considered. I now have this computer set up with a 16 gigabyte cache. (It was necessary to set the Policies to Optimize for performance to increase the value above 4 gigabytes.) I am using a mid-speed flash drive that tests at 13 MB/sec on that computer and that eBoostr uses at 10MB/sec. (It tests at 19 MB/sec on my high end laptop.)

I am also now using eBoostr on my high end lap top. I estimate it starts up about one-third faster. I am using an 8 gigabyte flash drive that tests, and that eBoostr uses, at 32 MB/sec.

*Contributed by Jack*

*Luff*

## [Excel: A Fill Handle Alternative](#)

MC3 members have had quite an exposure to the Excel Fill Handle in articles and

demonstrations. It is useful to anyone using Excel. However, the Fill Handle is essentially a link to the Fill – Series option under the Edit menu. There are some times that this option is more direct than the Fill Handle.

Suppose you want to enter the numbers 1 to 365 in a column, say for the days of the year. With the Fill Handle, you could enter 1 in the top cell and use Ctrl + Fill Handle to “drag” the numbers down for 365 cells.

The menu option is to enter 1 in the top cell and, with that cell as the active cell, select Edit – Fill – Series to bring up the Series dialogue box. Select Columns and Linear and enter 1 in the Step values box (if necessary) and 365 in the Stop value box. After clicking on OK, the string of numbers is entered down the column. There is no need to “drag” down the column.

There are some other options under Series. For example, enter 1/1 (January 1) in a cell. Bring up the Series dialogue box as above and select Columns, Date and Weekday and enter 12/31 in the Stop value box (with 1 in the Step values box). When OK is clicked, the weekdays of the current year are entered down the column.

Other options under Series include applying a multiplicative Growth factor to a starting value and extending the trend in a series of numbers as either a Linear or a Growth pattern.

*Contributed by Jack*

*Luff*

The Editor patiently anticipates articles for next month's (April's) issue, especially from those members who have not yet contributed to our newsletter. Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue. --Lucë