# The Databus

## May Meeting …

E–Book Readers: PROFESSOR SCHOEMANN explains it all for you.

KINDLE, NOOK, SONY, I–PAD — the list of e–book readers seems endless. What's a buyer to do? Are formats interchangeable? How legible is each one? Can you download that hot new bestseller wirelessly? It's enough to make your head spin faster than a SATA drive!

Have no fear — Longtime DMA member **Steve Schoemann** will review popular e–book readers, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each at our general membership meeting, **7 P.M., Tuesday the 25th,** at the **Huber Heights Athletic Foundation, 5367 Fishburg Road, Huber Heights 45424.** Click **here** for a map. Why does Steve think Amazon's Kindle is a "doomed" product? Join us on Tuesday to find out!

## In This Issue …

### Inside:

YOU'LL SEE A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS in *TDB*, as we learn more about desktop publishing and design. Many of these improvements are small (literally — we're not indenting our paragraphs quite as much) — and many are obvious, for example, we're using a modified version of one of Microsoft Publisher's® many built–in templates. Special thanks go to DMA Vice–President **Grant Root** and Webmaster **Dave Lundy** for several typographical and design suggestions (We haven't followed all of them), and pointing out misprints.

As important, a new department begins with this issue: "In & Around DMA." We'll feature Minutes of the DMA Trustees' meetings, running two months at a time until we've caught up with 2010. In addition, we'll have news about DMA members. If you've won an award, have a new job, retired from an old one, had a child, or passed some other milestone in your life, let *TDB* know (see page 2 for contact information).

In this issue, we have an article on a nifty utility that converts PDF documents (like this one) into text files. It's free if you use it on line. And there's an Part I of an essay by *TDB* Editor **Martin Arbagi** about how the Ancient Greeks "digitized" reality — or at least tried to do so.

Finally, an old favorite returns: **Bob Click's** "Deals Guy" column, filled with reviews of and discounts on hardware and software.

In future issues, we hope to continue **Mike Morris's** useful "Experiments in Desktop Publishing"; and "The 'Droid Does," **Jim Scheef's** lighthearted review of Google's new Android OS for cellular telephones, as soon as we get updates from APCUG.

# The Dayton Microcomputer Association®, Inc.

Post Office Box 4005
Dayton, Ohio  45401

ESTABLISHED IN 1976, DMA is a group of Dayton–area hobbyists and professionals in the field of computing and information technology. General membership meetings are usually on the last Tuesday of each month. DMA has a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in areas ranging from digital photography and geneology to the Linux operating system. Each SIG meets according to its own schedule. Please visit our **home page** to learn more.

## Officers and Board of Trustees

## Submissions …

THE DATA BUS welcomes compliments, complaints, suggestions, and especially articles. We can accept articles in ASCII, or as attachments in Microsoft Word or Works, Open Office Writer, Word Perfect, or — yes — even WordStar! No PDF files, please. Send e–mails to:

 Editor(@)DMA.org

All articles are subject to editing for spelling, grammar, usage, and space. Please retain a copy of your work, as THE DATABUS cannot be responsible for loss. When articles are of roughly equal quality, those by paid–up DMA members always receive preference.

# IN & AROUND DMA

DMA member **Catherine Devlin** received the Python Software Foundation's Community Service Award for her long–term contributions to PyCon, the organization of the first two PyOhio regional conferences, for promoting diversity in the Python community and for educational efforts.

Said Catherine: "I am — stunned! With all the galaxy of people making Python great, I can't imagine how to decide which ones to single out in any given quarter — but I'm still enormously flattered to be one of them! Thank you!"

For more, go to:

http://pyfound.blogspot.com/2010/03/final-2009-community-service-awards.html

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dayton Microcomputer Association, 4 January 2010.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M., by Glady Campion, President. (The opening was a little late because of snow.)

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Martin Arbagi (Secretary), Doug Bell, Glady Campion (President), Nancy Christolear (Treasurer), Ken Phelps, Gary Turner, Jim Ullom, Ron Williamitis.

OFFICERS WHO ARE NOT TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Vice–President Grant Root.

VISITORS:

Financial Advisor Chris Tenbarge, and J. Simmons, representing Dayton Diode.

REPORT BY CHRIS TENBARGE

The rules were suspended to permit Financial Advisor Chris Tenbarge to speak. She presented the Trustees with a number of investment options (*i.e*, stocks, bonds, etc.) for DMA's funds, which are at present deposited exclusively in banks.

OFFICERS' REPORTS.

PRESIDENT (Glady Campion):

We have received an annual report on the status of the endowed Dayton Microcomputer Association Scholarship at the University of Dayton.

VICE–PRESIDENT (Grant Root):

The Linux Special Interest Group (SIG) will have a booth at Tech Fest. The membership of another SIG, Dayton Diode, is generally supportive of a proposed charter.

SECRETARY (Martin Arbagi):

Glady moved that we accept December's Minutes with a number of corrections. Seconded by Ron Williamitis. Motion passed.

TREASURER (Nancy Christolear):

Nancy submitted four months' worth of transactions, bringing DMA's finances up to date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

AUDIT:

No report.

FUNDING:

No report.

MEMBERSHIP (Glady Campion):

DMA membership is unchanged from November, with 147 Regular Members, 5 Associate Members, 2 Life Members, and no Student Members.

PROGRAMS (Jim Ullom):

Our annual Holiday Banquet had 51 attendees. The Silent Auction netted $39.00.

January's program will be "Windows 7: Part II." Gary Coy will present.

February will feature a presentation by DMA member Dave Schwab.

March's presentation will tentatively be on tax preparation software. Possible presenters are Gary Mullins or Ed Jones, both CPAs.

WIRELESS DAYTON DAYS:

No report.

OLD BUSINESS.

TECHFEST:

DMA is registered for a booth at TechFest in February. As already mentioned, the Linux SIG is also registered. Gary Ganger will have his Computer Museum there.

HOLIDAY BANQUET:

Although our new caterer did a good job overall, and was able to accommodate last–minute arrivals, in 2010 we should *strictly* enforce the deadline for buying tickets, and not admit anyone at the door.

NEW BUSINESS.

2010 HAMVENTION:

DMA should have a booth at this year's Hamvention. Last year, donations almost paid for the cost of the booth.

GOOD OF THE ORDER.

Nancy Christolear: Thanks to Chris Tenbarge for her excellent presentation.

ADJOURNMENT.

Ron Williamitis moved adjournment at 8:58. Nancy Christolear seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted,**
*Martin Arbagi*, **Secretary.**


## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dayton Microcomputer Association®, 1 February 2010.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M., by Glady Campion, President.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Martin Arbagi (Secretary), Doug Bell, Glady Campion (President), Nancy Christolear (Treasurer), Ken Phelps, Gary Turner, Jim Ullom, Ron Williamitis.

OFFICERS WHO ARE NOT TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Vice–President Grant Root.

VISITORS:

Dave Lundy; Jason Sanders and J. Simmons, representing Dayton Diode.

OFFICERS' REPORTS.

PRESIDENT (Glady Campion):

No report.

VICE–PRESIDENT (Grant Root):

The Special Interest Group (SIG) contact with Dayton Diode will be Jason Sanders. (See also "Old Business," page 3, below.)

SECRETARY (Martin Arbagi):

Nancy Christolear moved that we accept January's Minutes with a number of corrections. Seconded by Jim Ullom. Motion passed.

TREASURER (Nancy Christolear):

Nancy submitted a statement of DMA's Net Worth, and a preliminary budget for DMA now that we no longer have the building at 119 Valley Street and an employee. This triggered a detailed discussion about investment income.

Martin Arbagi made a motion to commit $10,000 to investment advisor Chris Tenbarge. Jim Ullom seconded. Passed, with 2 abstentions, Ken Phelps and Nancy, herself.

Jim Ullom moved to commit $5,000 to a short–term certimcate of deposit. Ron Williamitis seconded. Passed, with 1 nay (Doug Bell) and 1 abstention (Nancy).

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

AUDIT:

No report.

FUNDING:

No report.

MEMBERSHIP (Glady Campion):

DMA membership is 141 Regular Members, 6 Associate Members, 2 Life Members, and no Student Members.

PROGRAMS (Jim Ullom):

February will feature a presentation by DMA member Dave Schwab on Arduino, a programmable chip with applications in Robotics, among other things.

March or April's presentation will tentatively be on Windows Server 2008® by Matt Hester. The meeting would be a joint one with the Dayton–Area Networking Professionals Association (DANPA) and NASAC, a Xenia–based users' group headed by Jim Ullom.

PUBLICATIONS:

Glady C. asked Martin A. to remind her to get together some time in the upcoming week.

WIRELESS DAYTON DAYS:

No report from Peter Hess, who is Chairman of this committee. However, Nancy Christolear reported that she at last got together with Peter, and her signature as well as his now appears on the WDD checking account.

**OLD BUSINESS.**

TRUSTEES' RETREAT:

J. Simmons, who was the Retreat Facilitator, said the Board "did exceptionally well in a new paradigm." He promised to supply a summary of the proceedings.

Glady Campion extended the thanks of the Board for the outstanding job Mr. Simmons did.

The Board extended thanks to Nancy Christolear for her hospitality, including the food.

DAYTON DIODE:

Jason Sanders told the Trustees something about himself and his work. **(See also Officers' Reports, page 1.)**

The Charter for the group has been approved mostly unaltered from its latest draft. The biggest changes: (1) Dayton Diode does not require any formal motion of approval from DMA, its parent body, for occupying space, provided no lease is signed; and (2) All officers are elected for one–year terms.

VENUE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

Our lease with the Huber Heights Athletic Foundation ends in May. Martin contacted ASC about the availability of room 300 at the Regional Center. He also led the Trustees upstairs for a tour of the room to check its suitability.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

INSTALLFEST:

Gary Turner reported that an Installfest will be held at Sinclair Community College on 20 March. The exact place is to be announced, but it will probably be somewhere in Building 5.

DOOR PRIZES:

Noting that he was in charge of door prizes at NASAC meetings, Jim Ullom asked whether or not DMA should have a "Door Prize Czar" to solicit door prizes for DMA's monthly General Membership Meetings. This led to a discussion of member benefits (such as discounts on computer books formerly offered to DMA members by some local stores).

NOTIFICATION OF MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Jim also asked if a notification of our General Membership Meeting couldn't be sent out via e–mail, preferably in HTML format.

LINDA BUTLER:

Linda Butler, an acquaintance of Jim Ullom, had oqered to do grant–writing work for DMA a number of years ago. Her firm, Butler Consulting, also does fund–raising, and Jim suggested we look again at hiring her.

GOOD OF THE ORDER.

Ron Williamitis: "Let's keep on keepin' on."
Gary Turner: Welcome to Jason Sanders.
Jason Sanders: Nice to meet all of us.
Doug Bell: Must we be out of the Conference Room *exactly* at 9 P.M.?
Grant Root: Good riddance to January!

ADJOURNMENT.

Ron Williamitis moved adjournment at 9:00. Jim Ullom seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted,**
*Martin Arbagi*, **Secretary.**

## A SMART TIP from *Smart Computing:*

**Troubleshoot Options In Windows 7:** One of the coolest additions to Window 7 is an extensive Troubleshooting center. But there is more here than might meet the eye. You can open the console by typing "troubleshooting" (without quotes) in the Start Search box and pressing ENTER. The first time you start this tool, you may be asked if you want to update the troubleshooting tools available. If you agree, Trouble-shooting reaches out to Microsoft for an updated list of programs. Now, click View All in the task pane. The list of problem–specific tools now includes both those installed on your system (tagged as "Local" in the third column) or available from Microsoft's online library. Mousing over any of these choices pops up a thumbnail description of what they di-agnose. If you click one of the online items, the tool will be downloaded and executed.

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www.SmartComputing.com/groups
http://www.smartcomputing.com/groups/Default.aspx?guid= b0d0a609520d4f12a7e9df5c5e4bee6e
to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!

**Convert a PDF File to a Text File**
*By* Sr. DOROTHY ROBINSON, Newsletter
Editor, *The OMUG News*
Olympia Microcomputer User Group,
Washington
http://olymug.org/
srdorothy(@)gmail.com

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HAVE YOU BEEN WISHING you had a
piece of software that would con-
vert PDF files to text files that you
can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an
arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such a program.
It's called easyConverter Desktop, and
costs about $20. That sounds like a good
buy to me. But it only works with Win-
dows (2000, XP, Vista, and Win 7). So that
leaves a lot of people, for example, Linux
users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a
free, online utility that does the same
thing. And your operating system doesn't
come into it. Open your browser and go to
http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp
and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that
says "Convert PDF to Word for Free"
you'll see a place to browse your computer
and select a file. Note that there is no need
to provide your email address, since you'll
just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or
click once then click Open), then click the
Upload and Convert button. Press it *only
once*, and wait; larger files may take a while

to upload. The conversion is pretty fast,
under a minute for the one or two page
files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on up-
loads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do
a lot of files, or large ones, it would be
great to have an application on your com-
puter to do it — thus eliminating the time
to upload.

The next step is downloading the text
file. I'm not sure why the instructions say
to Right Click on the link to download the
file, because for me at least it didn't work.
I *left* Clicked instead and the download
dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file
(.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened
by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or
other word processors or text editors, and
be available for editing. When you save it
you can do so as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks: "What should (your
browser) do with this file?" The first
choice is to open the file with the default
application (mine showed OpenOffice) or
you can choose another from a drop–down
list. The second choice is to save the file,
and if you choose Save the file, your
download manager will save it to the de-
fault location — or you might get a Save as
dialog and choose where to save it. One
caution: opening the file directly rather
than downloading it got me a Read Only
file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for
editing purposes, save the file before open-
ing.

Make your choice by clicking a radio
button, then click OK. You now have a
text file you can edit. And the quality is
very nice, too — for *mostly text* docu-
ments. I tried a PDF file that I had origi-
nally created in OpenOffice Writer, which

contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! For a postal PDF, which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better, but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect — and perfectly editable.

For me, an Ubuntu Linux user, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

## A SMART TIP from Smart Computing:

**When In Doubt, Reboot & Reboot:** Dropped connections, sluggish speed, limited connectivity, and "missing" networks often can be resolved simply by rebooting the wireless router first, and then rebooting the affected PC. [If your router is in another room, you can reboot it through software in Windows Vista and Windows 7 — *TDB* Editor.] Start by unplugging the router for 30 seconds and reconnecting it. Often, a router reboot will reset the IP address and the signal so that the devices can pick them up again. If that doesn't work, reboot the affected PC.

**The DealsGuy**
*By* Bob ("The Cheapskate") Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users' Group

W E'VE BEEN WORKING A FEW TRADE SHOWS, and I always find them interesting. I work an assigned post these days, usually on a loading dock, and can't look things over unless we go in early, which I rarely do. However, occasionally during the show setup days, I get to visit with a few exhibitors whose booths are located near my dock, as they go outside for a smoke. Other times, I only get to see the setup contractors who are assembling booths.

The PGA (Pro Golfer Association) show in January was smaller this year, yet well attended. Attendance was about 30,000. There was a booth near my post that sells a unique device that calculates data to improve a golfer's swing. They call it the Game Changer, or the GC2. It doesn't look like much because it's a small electronic device. It's a bit large for your jacket pocket, but fits easily in your golf bag. The device opens up, and you place it on the turf off to the side of your golf tee so it can photograph your swing. It has two cameras in it a few inches apart and when you make your drive, both cameras snap a picture. Then almost instantly, the device calculates all kinds of data pertaining to your drive, consisting of your launch angles, speed, spin and much more.

When I watched the guy in the booth drive the ball up against a curtain, I saw the flash of the cameras, and in a few seconds, an entire screen of data was quickly displayed including a heavy line designating exactly where the drive would travel and land. They had it connected to a 42"

plasma TV in the booth to display the data, but it could be hooked up to a variety of handheld smart–devices via Bluetooth. It has a USB output enabling the data to be used by various customized applications. The GC2 also has speakers to announce the data if you prefer.

If this gadget fascinates you, check the Web site at:

http://www.foresightsports.com

for more information and a picture of the GC2. If you are an enthusiastic golfer and feel this item might help you, why not pop for the six grand and buy it for yourself for Christmas, birthday, Father's Day, or any other occasion that you can think of. After all, don't you deserve it? Some guys might buy their wife one for Christmas, and then borrow it.

I saw another interesting item, although much less expensive, for improving your swing. It's a specially designed club that helps to find out what's wrong with your swing, and can be used either inside or outside. I watched guys take a nice swing and the balls simply flipped up in the air and dropped behind them because they didn't swing right. Others did better. I didn't understand what was going on, but you can visit

http://www.slingergolf.com

Priced at $89.95, this must be for the blue-collar golfers.

I also saw a guy walking along with a three-wheeled electric golf caddy trailing behind him and when he stopped, the caddy stopped, then when he went on, it followed. He said it was a prototype. I loved that one, but show management showed up and told him to please keep the machine in his booth, so I didn't see him again. I'm sorry I didn't get any informa-tion from the guy. There were many booths with electrically operated golf–bag carts so it was easy to miss.

Bat–Caddy had an electric golf caddy selling for $590 and was manually con-trolled. They also had a model you could run with a remote for $995. Their Web site is

http://www.batcaddy.com

When finishing this column, I noticed they had special deals on their Web site that ended April 30, 2010, but why not check for deals when you read this just in case they have another deal. Would an electric caddy mean "going green?"

**Ready For A Different Way To Hold A Conference?**

The FACUG 2011 Spring Conference Cruise is shaping up gradually, but surely. The deadline has been extended to June 30, 2010 so it's not too late to sign up. People are slow to register, but the last I heard, 180 were signed on. There are no special restrictions as to who can sign up, but one person from each cabin must register for the conference and be a user group member. You can check it out on the FACUG Web site

http://www.facug.org

Looking at the 2011 FACUG cruise, you can't go wrong with such great people leading the sessions. Looks like all fees and taxes are included in the prices, but look it over for other incentives. I believe no cruise will be planned for 2012 because not everybody wants it done on a cruise ship and it is a problem for an individual atten-dee.

**I Tried To Refurbish My Computer With A Software Product**

My computer is not acting very normal so I decided to try Reimage Repair to see

what it could do. I read Ira Wilsker's fa-vorable review of Reimage, and it's also listed on the *Windows Secrets* Newsletter, which I respect, so I downloaded it when they offered a discount to see if it would improve my computer's performance. My experience hasn't worked well as yet. I had to try four times before it would finish, and it never did actually finish as it should have. Only one of my problems was helped so far. I sent them a message asking for suggestions via e–mail and they re-sponded that I should try the repair with the machine in "Safe Mode." I tried to do that, but while in Safe Mode I am unable to connect to the Internet and Reimage won't work that way. I sent another mes-sage stating my problem and they are sug-gesting a remote control session. I need to set up a time to do that so I am in the process or arranging it. [Other than nor-mal maintenance — defragging and scan-ning for viruses and malware — I've had no luck with software that claims to "refurbish" my hard drive. — *TDB* Editor]

**Reminder**

The special offers for Diskeeper prod-ucts are probably still good so keep that in mind. Their new technology for prevent-ing fragmentation before it happens is unique and I read a favorable review about it in a user group newsletter. Here are the URLs for the deals:

Diskeeper 2010 Home 2-pack $49.95 (Save $30)
https://www.diskeeper.com/store/checkout/addtocart.aspx?item=49115&qty=1&srchash=_ioxswm_p

Diskeeper 2010 Professional 2-pack $99.95 (Save $20)
https://www.diskeeper.com/store/checkout/addtocart.aspx?item=49365&qty=1&srchash=_ioxswm_p

Diskeeper 2010 Pro Premier 2-pack $169.95 (Save $30)
https://www.diskeeper.com/store/checkout/addtocart.aspx?item=49366&qty=1&srchash=_ioxswm_p

Undelete 2009 Home and Diskeeper 2010 Home bundle $49.95 (Save $20)
http://www.diskeeper.com/store/checkout/addtocart.aspx?item=50519&qty=1&srchash=_ioxswm_p

**Take A Look At Specials From Your Fa-vorite Vendor**

I sometimes get an announcement from Corel, but the discount usually ex-pires before you editors could get it pub-lished for your members, since I write this column two months in advance. However, here is an announcement for some full products and upgrades that I just received, and I have no idea what the deadline is. Hopefully you can beat it if there's some-thing you need.

For CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X5: The full version price is $49.90, but the up-grade price is $19.90, less than the regular price.

For Corel DESIGNER Technical Suite X4: The full version price is $100 below the regular price and the upgrade price is the same as the regular price.

For WordPerfect Office X5 Standard: The full version and upgrade prices are $25 below the regular price.

For WordPerfect Office X5 Profes-sional: The full version price is $25 less than the regular price and the upgrade ver-sion is $21 below the regular price.

For Photo & Video Bundle: The price is $6.50 below the regular price, but there

seem to be differences in the bundle contents, *e.g.,* X2 in yours *vs.* X3 in the regular version.

Corel has always been a favorite with user groups. Here are some URLs to check for better information and additional products. Hopefully you can find all the information you need to make a decision:

http://store1.corel.com/corel/
category.jsp?
cat=cat3450073&trkid=31Mar10NACD
GSX5LicenseUGeDMeDM

or:

http://www.corel.com/content/pdf/
cdgsx5/
CDGSX5_version_comparison_matrix_en.
pdf

and finally,

http://www.corel.com

Check for additional information and comparisons. There are differences in the pages so do your homework. To order by phone. Call 1-877-502-6735, and use promo code 4212 (Mon–Fri, 9 P.M. to 7 P.M., Eastern Standard Time).

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts.

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

BobClick(@)BellSouth.net

Visit my Web site at

http://www.DealsGuy.com

## A SMART TIP from *Smart Computing:*

**Do You Need A Surge Protector?:** A surge protector looks like a power strip, and has several outlets to plug in your computer, monitor, and other peripherals, such as a printer or FAX machine. But more importantly, it also protects your computer and peripherals from power surges, which are sudden peaks in the electrical current flowing into your home. Power surges can be caused by downed power lines, faulty wiring, [lightning strikes —*TDB* Editor], or regular electrical maintenance in your neighborhood. Fluctuations in the electrical current being delivered to your PC and its components can cause permanent damage to hardware, such as the motherboard or hard drive, or the loss of irreplaceable files. Even if there's no immediate damage, over time, power surges can shorten the life of your computer. A surge protector will absorb any increase in electrical current, and shield your system from potential harm.

## "Digitizing Reality" — The Greek Experience — Part I

*By* Martin Arbagi

M Y FAMILY (or at least my wife and two of our three kids) and I were recently in Greece, and ended by staying an extra week, thanks to the eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland. (Click **here** for how to pronounce it.) Luckily, we did manage to get out before the riots became bloody. (Hey, if I could have had full Social Security at age 53, and some French and Germans were trying to raise my retirement age to 65, I'd riot too!)

The visit got me to thinking about the unique Greek contribution to Western Civilization. No, it isn't retirement at 53. Nor is it art or literature. *All* great civilizations — and many pre–civilized cultures (call them "barbarians" if you wish) — have produced great art and literature.

The *unique* Greek gift to our culture was rationalism. Now the broadest definition of "rationalism" — using your reason to solve problems — is so broad as to be meaningless. For purposes of this article, rationalism has three components.

**1. The search for knowledge, even when it has no practical use.** Years ago, when I was teaching full–time at our local state university, a student from a toney suburban high school said one of his teachers informed him that the Greeks "invented mathematics." This is not true. Mathematics was invented at many different times and places by flea–bitten barbarians cutting notches into sticks to remind themselves how many goats or sheep they owned. Hundreds of these "tally sticks" have been found by archæologists all over the world.

Advanced math? All early civilizations had some knowledge of it. But the common thread running through all this was that no one valued knowledge for its own sake. It had to have some practical use. For example, the Ancient Egyptians had a good working grasp of trigonometry. The reason? Well, it seems that until the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 20th Century, Egypt was flooded periodically by the Nile River. The floods frequently obliterated property markers, and land had to be resurveyed afterward. Trigonometry is essential for surveying. The Ancient Mesopotamians, who lived in what is now Iraq, knew observational astronomy. They could accurately predict phases of the Moon, solar and lunar eclipses, and the motions of the planets and stars. But here again, knowledge of observational astronomy is essential for a number of *practical* uses: ocean navigation, regulation of the calendar, and — yes — astrology. (The pseudo–science of astrology was developed by the Mesopotamians. And if you believe in it, it's eminently practical.) The Ancient Greeks, however began asking questions and searching for knowledge even when the answers could have no foreseeable practical use. For example, around 500 B.C., a Greek named Democritus concluded that all matter is made up of tiny particles called atoms. These particles are invisible to the naked eye, and are constantly in motion. Democritus was wrong on one thing: he thought atoms could not be split. (In Greek, *atomos* means "indivisible," just as in English, *asymptomatic* means "without symptoms.") But it took 2,400 years before practical uses were found for Democritus' knowledge. Unfortunately, one of these "practical" uses was

enabling men to blow each other up with greater efficiency than ever before. On the other hand, atomic power is a relatively clean and cheap source of electricity.

**2. The search for material causes for material phenomena.** What I wrote above was not entirely correct. Pre–Greek civilizations did occasionally speculate on impractical matters, for example, the origins of the universe. The Ancient Mesopotamians thought that the universe originated with the murder of Tiama (alternate spellings: Tiamat or Tiamith). She was an obnoxious goddess. The other gods and goddesses finally had had enough, and decided to kill her. Her blood and other bodily fluids became the seas and rivers. Her flesh and muscle tissue became land, while her bones were used to make the mountains. However, when pre–Greek cultures did bring up fundamental questions, they normally came up with religious answers. Now at this point, let me say that not only am I not hostile to religion, but my family and I are regular churchgoers. But there are questions to which religion cannot provide an answer. Sickness is one. Pre–Greek cultures tended to ascribe disease to demonic possession or the anger of one or more gods. But the Greek thinker Pythagoras (who is better known as a mathematician) noticed that people who exercised regularly, were not overweight, got enough sleep, and exercised moderation in alcohol use did not become ill as frequently. Pythagoras (and other Greeks, such as Aristotle) recommended all these practices to stay healthy. They were looking for material rather than religious causes for poor health.

**3. Dividing things up to make them easier to understand.** We often hear about taking a "holistic" approach to things. That may be all well and good but … well, it just isn't *us.* We (meaning people of whatever race brought up in a Western culture) divide things for comprehension. The most obvious example is dissection of corpses in medical schools. But we also dissect space and time. Most of us wear time–dissectors on our wrists. That's what watches and clocks do, isn't it? They split time to make it easier to comprehend. If the bus I take to work arrives at 8:23 A.M., I look at my watch, and know just when to be at the bus stop. Longitude and latitude on maps dissect space in the same way.

OK, so where did Greek science go wrong? Here, we arrive at the point that is relevant to us as computer users. One of the reasons Greek science failed was overemphasis on logic.

More about this in the June issue!

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**Why does *The Databus* distort e-mail addresses?**

  You'll notice that e–mail addresses are altered. For example, "No.One@Nowhere.net" is given as "No.One(@)Nowhere.net."

  We don't give live links to *individual* e–mail addresses for privacy. You must copy an e–mail address "by hand" into your Web browser, then delete the excess parentheses. On the other hand, you can access all public Web sites in *TDB* merely by clicking on them.
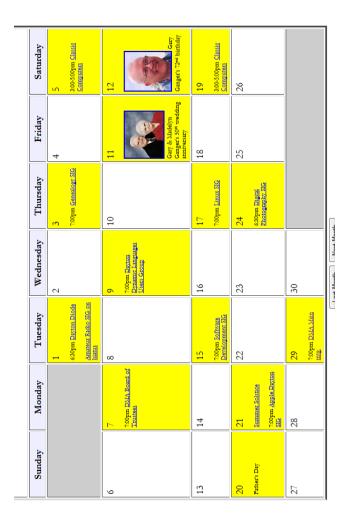
## DMA Membership Application/Renewal

PLEASE ALLOW UP TO THREE WEEKS FOR APPLICATION PROCESSING AND INTERNET SET–UP

Name: _____ Birth date:_____/_____/_____
                                                                                    mo.   day   year

Associate Name: _____ Birth date:_____/_____/_____
                                                                                    mo.   day   year

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) (_____) _____-_____ (Work) (_____) _____–_____x_____

I wish to have my name and address published in the club roster:     YES ❑          NO ❑

E–mail address: _____@_____

Name of DMA member who recruited me: _____ (only new regular memberships)

Are you a current or recent DMA Member? Yes ❑   No ❑   Change of Address only? ❑ Today's date: _____/_____/_____

If you are renewing, please give your Membership Number (from your membership card) _____

## Type of Membership

Application is for: New Membership ❑   Membership Renewal ❑   Associate Membership* ❑

If applying for free student membership, please give school name and student ID number: Available only for students under 22 years old.

School Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

\* A family or associate membership is an additional membership for a member of your immediate family or someone else who is living in the member's household. If this is a family or associate membership, give name of regular member:

_____

Dues/Fees (Dues and Fees are subject to change without prior notice):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Membership (one year — New or Renewal) | 1.) ❑ $25.00 | ❑   Cash |
| Family or Associate Membership (must live at same address as regular member) 2.) ❑ $12.50 | | ❑   Check |
| Free* Student Membership | 3.) ❑ FREE | Check # _____ |

Membership (one year — New or Renewal)                               1.) ❑ $25.00

Family or Associate Membership (must live at same address as regular member) 2.) ❑ $12.50

Free* Student Membership                                              3.) ❑ FREE
\* for students under 22 yrs of age (Student Members cannot vote in DMA elections.)

Please assign me a user ID for E–mail and Usenet news access          4.) ❑ $10.00 one–time setup fee for new accounts.

Total - - - Lines (1 and 2) (+4 if checked)                         5.) $_____

Make your check payable to Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. DMA, and then send the check and application to:
                         PO Box 340402    Beavercreek, OH 45434-0402

DMA Use only: Membership # _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____ Processed by: _____

REV: 21 May 2010

# June Calendar (corrected as of 24 May 2010)

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1<br>6:30pm Dayton Diode Amateur Radio SIG on hiatus | 2 | 3<br>7:00pm Genealogy SIG | 4 | 5<br>3:00-5:00pm Classic Computers |
| 6 | 7<br>7:00pm DMA Board of Trustees | 8 | 9<br>7:00pm Dayton Dynamic Languages Users Group | 10 | 11<br>Gary & Madelyn Ganger's 50th wedding anniversary | 12<br>Gary Ganger's 72nd birthday |
| 13 | 14 | 15<br>7:00pm Software Development SIG | 16 | 17<br>7:00pm Linux SIG | 18 | 19<br>3:00-5:00pm Classic Computers |
| 20<br>Father's Day | 21<br>Summer Solstice<br>7:00pm Apple Dayton SIG | 22 | 23 | 24<br>6:30pm Digital Photography SIG | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29<br>7:00pm DMA Main mtg | 30 | | | |

Last Month   Next Month

**To rotate the document clockwise, press Ctrl Shift +**
**press Ctrl Shift - to rotate counterclockwise.**