



If you are reading this on your computer display, remember that **Acrobat Reader** has a **zoom** feature for enlarging text and graphics.

**Next Computer Club (BVCC)
Meeting, January 10, 2011, 7:30 PM**

January, 2011 Program

Games BV People Play [Program will be on 99.]

Notes from Kent

Need an Excuse for a Cruise?

A number of cruise lines have recognized that a notable share of potential customers are not altogether comfortable with today's technology. Three lines that reportedly have embraced computer classes as part of cruise offerings are Celebrity (which has a partnership with Apple and offers classes on Macs), Princess, and Holland America (which has a partnership with Microsoft), see



<http://www.azcentral.com/travel/articles/2010/06/07/20100607cruise-ship-computer-classes0613.html>. Interestingly, the Holland America courses are all free while Celebrity offers a mix of free and \$20 courses.

Focusing on that with which I am familiar, the Holland America courses use the travel experience (including digital photography and working with digital images) as core concepts. Other courses address issues like buying a computer (obviously one that runs Windows 7), maintenance, and Windows 7 tips and tricks. The teacher, identified as a

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“techspert,” is Microsoft-trained and offers several techspert sessions over a seven-day cruise (in which s/he responds to any and all questions) in a lab setting (not unlike that in Bristol Village, except the equipment is running Windows 7). It is a lot like having Len Nasman along on your cruise, available at least daily to assist with any problems you encounter or questions that arise.

The Holland American labs are located in a lockable designated room. On our ship, about 18 laptops were available for classes, but attendees were encouraged to bring their own machines for the consultation or flash drives for downloading free software. Such free classes are in contrast to the computers offered in the “library” area of the ship that require costly purchase of internet time (50 cents a minute in blocks of 250 minutes, if I recall correctly) and attendees are cautioned that the lab is only for lab purposes, not a free way to check one's e-mail.



Games Not to Play

Since the program this month will focus on games, it is probably advisable to note the proliferation of pain-in-the-backside games.



Two that I would mention are "Farmville," claiming 57,850,710 monthly active users, and "Mafia Wars," 19,359,557 monthly active users, which are promulgated on Facebook (www.facebook.com). Both are based on encouraging/rewarding cooperation (not a bad thing) but to no justifiable purpose that I can identify. For example, I would offer to send you an apple tree (in Farmville) and ask for you to send a gift in return. And that's the game except it goes on and on and on and spreads to everyone you know or who knows you. The result of the gift giving is an expansion of your farm and wealth. Mafia Wars is similar except the objective (as far as I as a non-player can tell) is to amass weapons to kill rival Mafia members and thus enhance your position through stealth and treachery. Games can be fun but these (and a plethora of others listed on Facebook) are beyond my interest.

Games to Play

Rather than end on a down note, let me point to a site offering a fine assortment of games, the AARP: <http://games.aarp.org/?intcmp=dso-hp-sl-6>. These meet three criteria: 1) free, 2) relatively free of obnoxious ads, and 3) offering mental and/or coordination stimulation. Included are variations of solitaire and mahjong, including a Garden Mahjong that is based on matching familiar shapes (such as gloves, birds, etc.) rather than Chinese characters.



Did You Know or Do You Remember?

That the Club offers a small **paper shredder** for use by members. The beginning of a new year is a good time to clear away the clutter and get a handle on

your paper files. With identity theft such a concern, any paper that contains bank-account, credit-card, or social-security numbers should be shredded prior to disposal. The club shredder is adequate for small-scale shredding but for larger quantities that may have accumulated, the Kiwanis offer large-scale shredding once or twice a year. But the Club shredder is a good way to reduce the need for the Kiwanis service.

Kent Mulliner

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Web sites to try

by Len

Want to know what new and possibly crazy gadgets have been invented lately? Here are a couple of places to try:

<http://www.gizmag.com/aroundthehome/3/>

<http://www.geekiegadgets.com/>

<http://www.coolest-gadgets.com/>

Fred Notes

Are you into refilling your own ink cartridges ?? Open your INTERNET access. Search "InkTec (note, no 'K'). Refill kits for many cartridge types and manufacturers. Still a question ? MOVIE CLIP available for use with most refill kits offered. Watch and hear the expert Savings SUBSTANTIAL.



Fred Schneider

[Office Max also provides refilling for ink jet cartridges. One considerations is that many cartridges dispense ink through nearly microscopic holes in a piece of thin foil. These 'ink jets' can wear out and become damaged, so do not expect a cartridge to last forever. Ed:]

Free 3D Modeling

by Len

Sometimes it appears like Google is taking over the computer world. They dominate web surfing with their search engine, Google maps, the Google Chrome web browser, and that is only the beginning.

Try clicking on the word **More** near the top of the Google web search page. Then click on **even more** to get a full list of Google offerings.

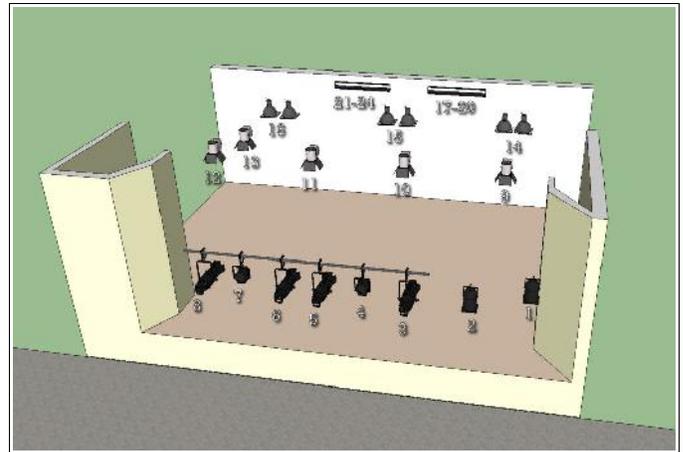


The Google application discussed in this article is a powerful 3D modeling tool called **SketchUp**. I have been involved with 3D computer modeling with personal computers for over 20 years. In the early days, 3D modeling was available in a limited form in expensive CAD (Computer Aided Design software). It has evolved in several directions. One form of 3D modeling is aimed at the business of mechanical design where it is closely related to the traditions, precision, and applications of engineering drawing. Another direction is architectural design where the traditions of preparing documentation for building construction are followed.

Although Google sells an expensive professional version of their program, the free version of SketchUp ignores the traditional mechanical and

architectural applications approaches and provides a tool for artists and casual users. SketchUp users are encouraged to contribute their models to a public data base where anyone can take advantage of existing models for their own use.

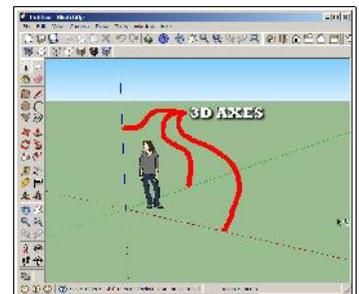
One example of this is a plan I created of the Glenn Center stage lighting for use by Sight and Sound.



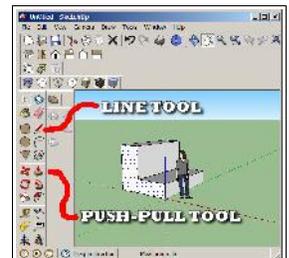
All of the light fixtures in this model were downloaded from the Google '3D Warehouse.' Once they were imported into the model, they were moved into position.

How SketchUp Works

SketchUp provides a perspective view of the world with 3 axes displayed. Each pair of axes defines a working surface or plane for constructing figures.



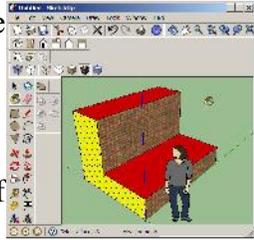
In the illustration, the **Line** tool was used to construct (using 6 lines) the L-shaped area in a vertical plane. The **Push-Pull** tool was then used to drag (or extrude) the L-shaped area into the step shaped object shown.



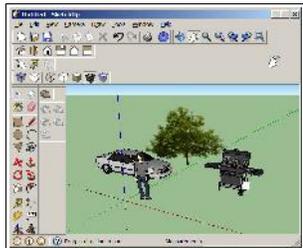
Once objects are in place, they can be moved, copied, rotated, combined into groups, and otherwise manipulated. The **Paint Bucket** tool can be used to add color or textures to surfaces.

The view of the 3D world can be rotated and zoomed.

You do not have to be an experienced 3D object designer to use SketchUp. There are thousand of objects available in the 3D Warehouse.



There is a large collection of You Tube video tutorials to help introduce the SketchUp basics. The SketchUp interface does not require any understanding of traditional drafting or orthographic projection techniques, or formal solid modeling terminology. 3D modeling is now available free to the masses. The only consideration is that your computer needs a fairly good graphics adapter and a fair amount of RAM.

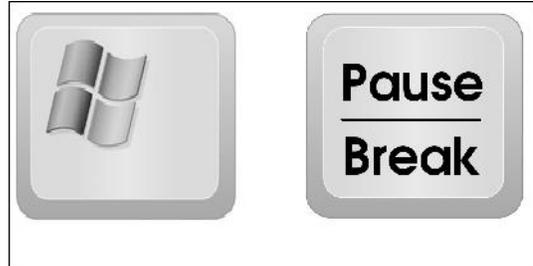


Download and install SketchUp, have a bit of fun and get an idea of how to create 3D designs.

Tech Text Tips Tricks to Remember

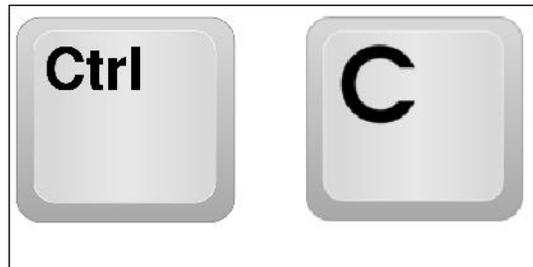
- Hold the **Windows** key down and press the **Pause/Break** key. This will open a window that shows your system specifications.

System Info



Copy

- Hold the **Ctrl** key down and press the **C** key to copy the current selection (text or graphics) to the clipboard.



Paste

- Hold the **Ctrl** key down and press the **V** key to paste the current clipboard contents (text or graphics) to the clipboard.

