



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

DECEMBER 2009

VOLUME NINETEEN
NUMBER TWELVE

MINUTES: SCUG CLUB
MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DECEMBER NEWS & SMART COMPUTING TIP & FUN FACTS 2

FIND THAT OLD ELECTRONIC GADGET MANUAL 3

WINDOWS 7 REVIEWS 4

CHEAP RAM 5

WELCOME TO THE BLAGOSHERE 6-8

TIPS, TRICK & WEBSITES 9

President Neal and Art fielded an assortment of interesting questions in the first part of the November meeting and then broke off for coffee and cookies.

The business meeting opened with the acceptance of **the secretary's report** as published in the newsletter. **Myron read his treasurer's report** and it was moved and seconded to accept it as read.

Annie Johnson was introduced as a new member and Joe Fornero reported that 43 boxes were packed at the October meeting for Operation Christmas Child program.

Next month we will be nominating officers for the new year and the annual potluck lunch

will be held. The club will supply the meat, cheese and bread for sandwiches and everyone is asked to bring a dish of food to pass. **Everyone's spouse or significant other is also invited to attend.**

The business meeting adjourned and Neal held the raffle, with the usual several nice prizes being won by members.

It was my turn to do the program and I passed around copies of cards that I have made to show what can be done with different programs, how certain things can be changed to make cards more personal and answered a few questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela V. Rester, club secretary

Club Information

Sauk Computer User Group
User Helping User
3406 E. 19th St.
Sterling, IL 61081
Neal Shipley - President
n.shipley1@comcast.net

Website-
www.saukcomputerusergroup.org
SCUG Email-
saukcomputerusegroup@gmail.com

Printing done by
Joe Fornero

MINUTES: CLUB BOARD MEETING NOV 17, 2009

Members of the SCUG Board met **at President Neal's home.** Present were Neal, Myron, Don, Joe Schmitt and Angela.

A new breakdown for payment when joining the club was brought up by Myron and will be presented to the club membership for approval.

Don Haag mentioned that he would like to retire as a board

member and this brings up the need also for several new members-at-large for the board and nominations will be taken at the December business meeting.

Joe S. made the motion and Myron seconded the motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by
Angela Rester, club secretary

As a reminder club dues are due in January, but can be paid in December. \$20 for single members and \$26 for a family. For new members that joined with a coupon this does not apply.

Santa Joe has been working on his Christmas trivia, movie and music program. So make sure you listen to lots of Christmas music and watch all of the older Christmas movies, but it probably **won't help. After all it's all for fun and I** will have gifts and prizes for everyone. So bring your spouse or friend and join in the fun. And remember that Santa loves cookies, but no coconut.

We are going to be nominating officers and members at large at the December meeting and voting in January. If you enjoy the club and want to be part of the board make sure you have someone nominate you or nominate yourself. We can also use fresh ideas and new faces. Also if there is a program that you use and would like to give a presentation on it or a program that you think would be interesting to our members contact a board member.

We will be debuting a new computer at the December meeting with a new DVI cable, so things should be much clearer, if them darn gremlins stay away. Santa needs his elves, but gremlins, stay home.

Joe Fornero - Assistant Editor



SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS

Display Issues: If the images on your computer screen are fluctuating (one second they're there, and the next they're not), check your connections. If the connection between your PC and your monitor isn't perfect, the data may have difficulty making its way from the computer to the screen. Take a look at the cable running between the PC and the monitor. Is it bent or crimped? Are the pins not straight? Are the connectors loose? If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may need to replace or secure the cable.

- **Sunglasses For Your Camera:** If you've ever tried to take pictures on a sunny day and noticed bright reflections, it might be helpful to get your camera a pair of sunglasses. In a pinch, you can use average polarizing sunglasses held over a camera's lens to help reduce glare. A better option, however, is to use a polarizing filter that works the same way, but that is better suited to your camera. Regardless, you're sure to take better pictures by reducing glare.

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit www.SmartComputing.com/groups to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!

FIND THAT OLD ELECTRONIC GADGET MANUAL

by

Terry MacLennan

Have you ever tried to find the manual for some electronic gadget and discovered that it has mysteriously disappeared? It happened to me recently when I wanted to use an old personal CD player (before iPods). It was gone – vanished – kaput **and I didn't have a clue** how to use it except how to put the CD itself into it. **Didn't have a clue** how to move to a different track, pause, fast-forward or anything which basically made it useless to me as I wanted to play some CDs with old radio programs on them (some had well over a 100 so I needed to know how to advance to the track where I had last left off). What to do, what to do?

Then a brilliant thought came to me (Glenda yelling at me from the kitchen), **“Why not try the internet?”** **Oh sure, like I'm going to be able to find it there.** But just to prove her wrong, I **went to the manufacturer's** web site and, of course, the device was way too old to be there. Hah, I win! But **just on the off chance...** I kept on googling the web with the make and model until all of a sudden – I found a web site that promised to try to have manuals for just about every TV, radio, camera, webcam, GPS and every other electronic gadget one could think of.

<http://www.retrevo.com>

I did a quick search under the MANUALS tab using the manufacturers make and model and soon, up popped

the manual pdf icon. A quick free registration and I was in business with the manual downloaded to my computer. I think I have received one email in the last month from them so **it's not like you are going to be spammed.** Of course, their main business is selling but I'm not going to complain for them wanting to make a buck yet supplying such a nice service – for free!

WINDOWS 7 REVIEWS

Reprinted from Mark Wilson's "27 Takes on Windows 7 - Windows 7 review - **Gizmodo**." *Gizmodo, the Gadget Guide*. 22 Oct. 2009. Web. 25 Nov. 2009. <<http://gizmodo.com/5387822/27-takes-on-windows-7>>.

CNET "Windows 7 presents a stable platform that can compete comfortably with OS X, while reassuring the world that Microsoft can still turn out a strong, useful operating system."

PCWorld "...the final shipping version I test-drove appears to be the worthy successor to Windows XP that Vista never was."

NYTimes "[Microsoft's] three-year Windows Vista nightmare is over."

IT Pro "Windows 7...is competent and functional due to internal improvements and the user interface is attractive and good for productivity."

bit-tech "For want of a better way of describing it, Microsoft has essentially fixed Vista and the result is arguably Microsoft's best operating system to date."

Guardian "Windows 7 is simply the best version of Windows you can get."

Slate "Indeed, the new Windows is not only the best operating system that Microsoft has ever produced. It is arguably the fastest, most intuitive, and most useful consumer desktop OS on the market today."

Maximum PC "...Windows 7 is unquestionably the best version of Windows that Microsoft has ever released, and is the true successor to Windows XP."

Tech Radar "No version of Windows is ever perfect, but Windows 7 really is the best release of Windows yet."

PC Mag "It's far and away the best OS we've ever seen from Microsoft."

Wall Street Journal "I believe it is the best version of Windows Microsoft has produced."

ElectricPig "With Windows 7, Microsoft wants us to believe that it's got its OS back on track and for the most part we feel they have."

Engadget "Where Vista felt like a sprawling mess, Windows 7 has patched up the holes and feels like a tight, unified mechanism."

Telegraph "Windows 7 is the operating system Vista should have been..."

Hexus "This is the operating system that Windows Vista should have been."

Digital Trends "...Microsoft has returned for redemption with Windows 7, otherwise known as "what Vista should have been."

AP "Windows 7 [is] a slick, much improved operating system that should go a long way toward erasing the bad impression left by its previous effort, Vista."

V3 "...Windows 7 is a worthy successor to Windows XP..."

Federal Computer Week "There is nothing wrong with Windows 7 - and we've always thought Vista was a better operating system than its reputation suggested - so if a new system happens to come with it,

then you'll get a fine operating system."

PC Pro UK "We like Windows 7 a lot - so much so, that the disappointment that was Windows Vista has already become a distant memory..."

Technodorm "If you have the money to spend, there is no reason why you shouldn't upgrade."

Laptop Mag "If Vista left you somewhat disillusioned with Windows, we suggest you upgrade to Windows 7."

Cult of Mac "I need to go wash my eyes out with bleach."

The Inquirer "Windows 7 is as pretty as Apple stuff, just as easy to use, and does not treat you like a moron."

Computer World "...it's finally time to upgrade."

TechWorld "Windows 7 feels like an anti-Vista..."

Gizmodo "...if you're coming from Windows XP, Windows 7 will totally feel like a revelation from the glossy future. If you're coming from Vista, you'll definitely go "Hey, this is much better!" the first time you touch Aero Peek. If you're coming from a Mac, you'll—hahahahaha. But seriously, even the Mactards will have to tone down their nasal David Spadian snide, at least a little bit."

Have you upgraded to Microsoft Windows 7? Tell the other members of the club your story. Next month, we'll publish all articles from any club members about upgrading and then vote at the meeting who they think deserves a Club Polo shirt.

Now that I have a computer running again with XP and a decent size of hard drive, over 100 gigabytes, I decided to again load Flight Simulator X which requires 15 gigabytes of hard drive space.

Also, after noting that 1-gigabyte of RAM is recommended and having only a little over half of that I took Art **Bendick's suggestion to increase my virtual RAM** for no additional outlay of money.

For those that might not remember or more likely were not even alive, back in the 30s, a loaf of bread (unsliced) cost about a nickel. Now a day old loaf of oat flower (or other healthy) bread will cost at least a dollar. **Why is this? Could it be that a "dollar" is only worth 20 some odd cents now?** You do the math.

Anyway this is how you get more **"RAM" for nothing**. I list the steps using XP but other operating systems should be quite similar:

1. Pick **Start**
2. Pick **Control Panel**
3. I changed my display to see all the icons and clicked on the **System Icon**.
4. Pick **System Properties**
5. Pick the **Advanced Tab**.
6. Under the first paragraph speaking of *virtual memory settings* pick the **Settings Tab**.
7. Pick the **Advanced Tab**.
8. Just below the paragraph which mentions *virtual memory* pick the **Change Tab**.
9. Near the center of this screen will appear two windows labeled Minimum and Maximum referring to amounts of capable virtual memory allowed in your machine at this time. As I understand it; any amount between these numbers may be chosen.
10. To make a new choice, highlight the upper window. In my case the upper window showed 512 and the lower window showed 1536. So, holding my breath, I typed 1500 in the upper window.
11. I then picked the **Set Tab** and started breathing again.
12. I then picked the **OK Tab** three times.
13. I then got out of the **Control Panel** display.
14. At this time; should your curiosity overcome you, which mine did, I went through Steps 2 through 8 again and saw that the Minimum and Maximum windows now showed 1500 and 1536.
15. Satisfied, I repeated Steps 11 through 13 and loaded Flight Simulator X to my machine.

Don Haag

WELCOME TO THE BLOGOSPHERE

by Blaine Flamig

Blog. Blogger. Blogroll. Blogosphere. Roughly a decade ago these words didn't exist. Today, you likely not only have heard these terms, but you also might actually be a blogger. Even if you're not, you've seen or read something that stemmed from a blog—not surprising considering it's believed there are well over 100 million blogs globally. Now firmly entrenched in mainstream online culture and increasingly shaping how we communicate, share areas of expertise, acquire news, and even earn money, blogs are thriving. On the following pages, we'll discuss how blogs got to this point and help you create your own free blog.

Blog = Web Log

Blog simply stands for Web log. During blogging's early days in the late 1990s, most blogs took the form of diaries, but rather than logging insights, opinions, and reactions on paper for storing in a dresser drawer, bloggers posted digital entries in chronological order to a central online location where others could read them and leave comments.

Present-day blogs still consist of content the blogger generates, but the nature of that content has moved light-years beyond just being public diaries. Blogs are now dedicated to practically every imaginable topic. In fact, it's difficult finding a topic there isn't a blog about, whether the subject falls under politics,

sports, government, entertainment, religion, finances, parenting, shopping, home repair, travel, pets, history, space, nature, education, and so on.

Smart Computing, for example, maintains a tech-related blog at SmartComputing.com that's updated daily. Many companies maintain blogs to communicate developments, product details, and announcements with customers, partners, and competition. Intel (scoop.intel.com), Microsoft (windowsteamblog.com/blogs), and Google (googleblog.blogspot.com) are three examples. USA.gov includes employee-written blogs about federal programs and offerings at Gov Gab (blog.usa.gov/roller/govgab), while news outlets such as ESPN.com host blogging areas (sports.espn.go.com/espn/blog/main) within their Web sites.

Beyond acquiring content, however, blogging is as much about generating it. If you're a fledgling author who has penned a crime thriller, for example, a blog is a great, low-cost avenue for selling an ebook version directly to readers. Having trouble keeping up-to-date with family events? A blog that gives any family member rights to post updates, photos, recipes, and more is one solution. Say you have years of experience making fly-fishing lures. A blog could let you share tutorials

complete with detailed photos. Build a large enough reader following, add some advertising-related elements to your blog pages, and you could even make a few dollars off your passion. (For more on making money from blogging, see the "Blogging For Bucks" sidebar.)

Choices, Choices, Choices

In the years since blogs began showing up online, the traditional text-based approach to blogging has evolved into other forms, including blogs featuring mostly photographs (photoblogs) or videos (vlogs). A recent and very popular blogging incarnation is microblogging. Whereas a traditional blog post might range from a few paragraphs to multiple pages, microblogging involves using much shorter bursts of communication.

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is the most obvious example of microblogging. The site essentially serves as a free online destination that gives people tools to communicate via "tweets," or entries limited to 140 characters. Twitter's benefits can range from, say, sending tweets to family members about your dream trip to Paris as it's happening to following tweets *The New York Times* creates to let readers know of breaking news.

Blogging and microblogging's swelling popularity has largely benefited from the general public's growing reliance on and

comfortableness with mobile devices—a trend that has helped expand blogging beyond the PC and put it onto cell phones and smartphones. Blogging has also benefited RSS (Real Simple Syndication), a technology that lets users subscribe to blogs and aggregate new content as it's added for reading in one location using a reader application.

So, just how big is blogging? According to the 2008 “State of The Blogosphere” report from Technorati (www.technorati.com), which tracks online media and hosts a blog search engine, there were 94.1 million U.S. blog readers and 22.6 million U.S. bloggers in 2007. Technorati also cites separate March 2008 data that claims 184 million users globally have created a blog, including 26.4 million U.S. users, while 346 million users worldwide read blogs.

Create Your Own Blog

Once you've decided to start a blog, you need a place to keep it. If you already own a Web site, that's a natural location. Otherwise, numerous free and paid services online offer publishing software and blog hosting services. We've chosen Google's Blogger (www.blogger.com) as our example for creating a blog because it's free and arguably the easiest for new bloggers to use. Other noteworthy services include WordPress (www.wordpress.com), TypePad (www.typepad.com), LiveJournal (www.livejournal.com),

Movable Type (www.movabletype.com), and Xanga (www.xanga.com). Additionally, if you have a Microsoft Windows Live account (free; home.live.com), you can blog from within your Windows Live Spaces area.

To create a blog at Blogger.com, follow these steps:

1. On the Blogger.com home page, click Create A Blog. The following page will walk you through creating a Google account, which is required to log in to Blogger.com and access your blog. Beyond supplying an email address, you'll need to create a password and display name and accept Google's terms of service. Next, click Continue.

2. On this page, you'll enter a title for your blog. We named our example blog “The Secret Life of Guitarists.” You'll also need to enter a URL, or Web address, in the field Blogger provides on this page. If the URL isn't available, Blogger will inform you. Once your blog's URL is set, click Continue.

3. Here, you'll select a template for your blog. Blogger provides 12 templates that you can preview and choose from. You can change the template later on, as well as create your own blog design. We selected a Scribe template for our blog. Next, click Continue, and Blogger creates your blog.

4. Now, either click Start Blogging to begin creating a post or click Advanced Setup Options. The latter choice will guide you through options for switching your new blog's address to a domain you already own and have registered, or you can choose to buy a registered domain (\$10 per year through Google), such as www.secretlifeofguitarists.com.

To construct blog posts, Blogger provides a simple publishing interface complete with Posting, Settings, Layout, and Monetize tabs. Other tabs are included for New Post, Edit Posts, and Comment Moderation tasks. To create a new post, click the Posting tab and New Post tab. Here, enter a name for the post in the Title field. Directly below is an empty space in which you'll compose your entry. If you're familiar with editing HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), Blogger provides an Edit HTML view to do so. New bloggers, however, should stick to Blogger's Compose view.

Blogger provides numerous formatting tools to add some zing to posts, including font, type size, text color, pull quote, and bullet point options. Tools for embedding photos, video, and links are also available. Additionally, a Labels For This Post field lets you enter keywords related to the post to help make it more noticeable to search engines. A Post Options link

WELCOME TO THE BLOGOSPHERE (CONT.)

allows or disallows reader comments. This main work area is also where you'll edit past posts; configure publishing, formatting, commenting, archiving, emailing, and other settings; apply layout elements; and join Google's AdSense program, if interested.

Finally, because you now belong to Blogger's community of bloggers, your account also gets you a Dashboard area where you can enter profile information; configure email and mobile blogging abilities; track blogs you read; read updates and news from Blogger; view blogs in the Blogger community; and access video tutorials, the Help Center, AdSense resources, and other resources.

Blog Or Bust

With your new blog in your online arsenal, all that's left to do is start blogging. Whether you post entries sitting at a desk or while on the move from a smartphone, know that the more you blog, the more comfortable and adept you'll become at doing so. The key is to just get started.

Blogging For Bucks

An increasingly common reason people are now blogging is money. We're not talking millions, but some part-time bloggers are pulling in thousands a month from their blogs. Although some blogs generate income through selling products, most income from blogging is tied to advertising. For typical bloggers, this means working with an ad network or service to display ads on your blog pages. Google's AdSense (www.google.com/adsense), for example, is a free service that targets ads to your blog audience. The more visitors who interact with the ads, the more you earn. Generally, earning money blogging depends on creating respectable traffic to your blog, getting search engines to notice, and getting other blogs and Web sites to link to your blog.

Terms To Know

Read enough blogs, and you'll come across the following words eventually. Here is a definition for each.

- **blog**—short for Web log, blogs originated as online digital diaries that welcomed comments from others. Today, companies, churches, government agencies, retailers, and others reach their respective audiences via blogs.
- **blogger**—someone who posts to and maintains a blog
- **blogosphere**—an online community of blogs and bloggers
- **blogroll**—a list of blogs the blog author thinks highly of or is possibly affiliated with
- **microblogging**—a short, quick version of blogging made popular by Twitter
- **post**—an individual blog entry

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit www.SmartComputing.com/groups to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!

Tips, Tricks and Websites...

Mystery File...

I recently received an email containing a file that I could not open. After searching around the web I found

www.openwith.org that allows you to search by file extension or by the type of file such as video or document. The site will tell you which programs will open the file and even suggest free software to download.

Save a Webpage as a PDF:

If you would like to convert a webpage to a PDF file go to www.html-pdf-converter.com. Once you have converted it you can save it to a file or email it to others.

Free Delivery from Amazon:

Amazon usually ships for free if you spend \$25 or more. Many times you are just under

that amount and don't know what to buy. Try

www.superfiller.com where you can find items ranging from 50 cents to \$15.00. Simply go to the website, enter the amount you need for free shipping and the items on Amazon that most closely match that amount will be listed. Select the item you want, add it to your cart and there you go...

Information Please:

Sometime ago Google came out with a free service finding businesses by calling 1-800-goog411. I have used this often and it works well. Just recently I heard about another free mobile info service which finds both business and personal telephone #'s.

This would be great. I have not tried it but here is the number... 1-800-free411.

Let us know of your favorite tip, trick or website...

Bill Powell

Reprinted from The "FOX TALES" Newsletter Nov 2009 Edition. Website: <http://www.fvpc.org/>

SENILE VIRUS

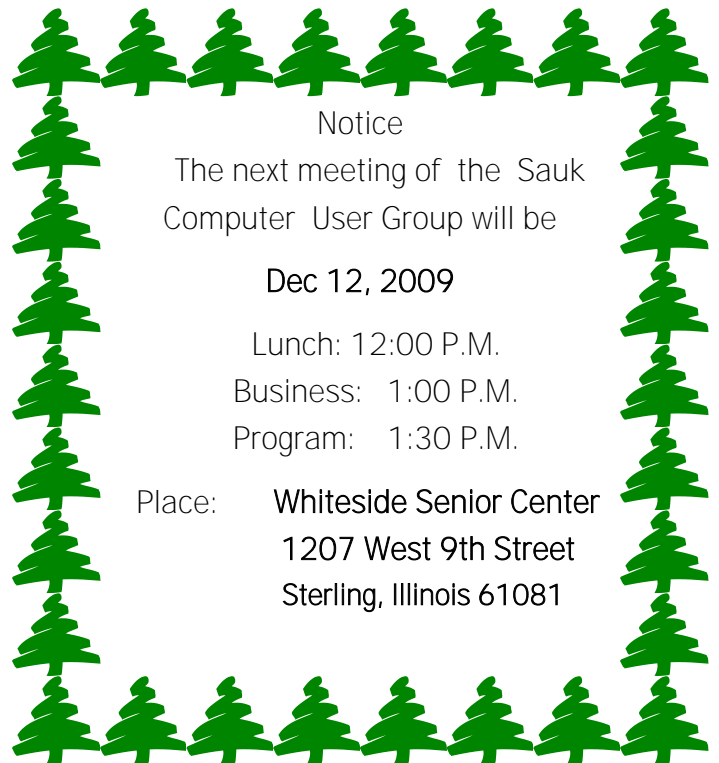
There is a new virus called the "Senile Virus" that even the most advanced programs of Norton and McAfee cannot take care of it. So be warned. The virus appears to affect those of us who were born before 1950!

Symptoms of the Senile Virus:

1. Causes you to send the same e-mail twice.
2. Causes you to send blank e-mail.
3. Causes you to send e-mail to the wrong person.
4. Causes you to send e-mail back to the person who sent it to you.
5. Causes you to forget to attach attachments.
6. Causes you to hit "SEND" before you've finished the e-mail.

Sauk Computer User Group
User Helping User
3406 E. 19th St.
Sterling, IL 61081

This is our Christmas Party so bring a dish to pass. Club will provide meat and bread. Be sure to bring your spouse or a friend. Santa Joe will be doing the program with lots of fun and prizes.



Notice

The next meeting of the Sauk
Computer User Group will be

Dec 12, 2009

Lunch: 12:00 P.M.

Business: 1:00 P.M.

Program: 1:30 P.M.

Place: **Whiteside Senior Center**
1207 West 9th Street
Sterling, Illinois 61081

DECEMBER'S MEETING THEME: SANTA JOE