



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

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MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2010

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The February 13, 2010 meeting began with the question and answer portion of the meeting with Art and Neal answering several questions from the members.

The business meeting began at 2:15pm with approximately 31 members present. We had one guest and one new member Kent McNeil. The secretary's report was approved as written. Myron Kliment, treasurer, reported the income and expenses for the month of January. Neal thanked Art for making the Club DVD and presenting the January program explaining how to use it. DVD's may be purchased for \$3.00 each or 2 for \$5.00.

Neal asked for sealed bids for a subscription to Smart Computing, winners to be announced later.

The board is always searching for programs that will interest the members. If you know of someone interested in giving a program or something you would like to hear, please contact a board member.

Betty Beatty won the T-shirt for the best article on Windows 7. Betty also brought up the idea of joining a group called APCUG Association of Personal Computer User Groups. A motion was made

by John and seconded by Joe. An amended motion was presented to have the board check on the organization before we actually join and was passed. The dues would be \$50.00 a year.

Terry talked about the computer lab needing more instructors and volunteers. The computer lab has a 98 system for sale by silent auction if you are interested in putting in a bid. The lab is having a basic plus class and you need to test out before you may take the class. Terry also told us we had 2 generous donations and new monitors were purchased for the computer lab.

The meeting adjourned on a motion by Ernie, with the raffle following. Betty and Harry won the silent auction for Smart Computing magazine.

Terry presented a very informative program on Windows Explorer.

Respectfully submitted in the
absence
of Secretary Angela Rester
Darla Stigall

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

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Joe Fornero

This month the emails of our members are included. Please do not share with anyone outside the club. If your email is wrong or missing it is because you did not fill out the form that was in the last two newsletters.

I would like to thank Betty Beatty for all the work she did contacting other computer groups that are part of APCUG and asking for their opinion of it. We received positive responses from all who replied. The board voted to join and the money has been sent in. So we will be getting more articles that I can use for the newsletter. Also software vendors may ask us to try out their software and send in our comments. They also may have presentations available that we can use for our monthly meetings. Next month you will see their logo on our website and newsletter.

We still have one subscription left to Smart Computing. It was not decided at board meeting, but we may decide to include it as another prize with the laptop computer raffle. So be sure to buy one of the special raffle tickets.

Joe Fornero—Editor

Windows 7 Shortcuts: In Windows 7, if you have several open windows, grab the top of the frame of one window and shake it back and forth. The rest of the open windows will minimize. The keyboard shortcut for the same function is WIN (the Windows logo key)-Home. Now press WIN-Down arrow to minimize the current window and WIN-Up arrow to maximize it. Pressing WIN-Right arrow or -Left arrow will dock the current window to the right or left edge of your Desktop.

Restart Your Computer For Better Performance: Many users log off their computer every night as a way to try to keep unwanted people from accessing their files on the computer. Instead of logging off of your computer every night, restart it. In doing so, you will enable Windows to re-

fresh itself and remove temporary files. It will also let your computer free memory and other resources that some of your hardware and software will not release, thereby making your computer work more smoothly and at a faster rate.

Going The Distance: If your current router has trouble distributing Wi-Fi (or Wi-Fi at an adequate speed) to every room in your house, look for a model that has two or three antennas and MIMO (Multiple Input, Multiple Output) technology. These features can increase the range and reliability of your Wi-Fi signal, improving the distribution of Wi-Fi across large houses or to devices that are far away from the router.

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MINUTES: CLUB BOARD MEETING FEB 16, 2010

The board meeting for February 16 was opened by President Neal Shipley and attended by members Joe Fornero, Myron Kliment, Dane Neiderman, Jim Wesner and Angela Rester.

Future program presentations were discussed at length. Terry MacLennan will give the March program on desktop management, how to take control of your desktop.

There also was a discussion and agreement to join APCUG.

A Dell wireless laptop will be raffled at \$3 per ticket or \$5 for two tickets, with a minimum of 15 tickets that need to be sold. This will be a separate raffle from the one normally held at the club meetings.

The meeting ended with a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by Angela Rester,
secretary

You're eager to update

Facebook or check out that funny new video your sister recommended. You open a browser or click a link and . . . nothing. After an interminable wait while Internet Explorer churns away, nothing loads except an error message or, worse, an entirely different site. **What do you do? We'll help you figure out what's wrong and get back to where you were going.**

Bad Address

First, figure out the source of the problem. If nothing but an error **loads, try a different site.** It's entirely possible that the problem is limited to the single URL (uniform resource locator) **you're accessing.** If you can get around normally elsewhere on the Web, check your source for **the "broken" link.** You may have mistyped the URL or clicked a bad hyperlink. A close reading of the address will usually reveal typos or malformed addresses. **If you're clicking through from an email, look for line breaks or otherwise incomplete links.** Many email clients automatically turn text that looks like a URL into a link, but can misread unusual addresses or cut URLs short when the address contains unexpected characters or crosses more than one line. If everything looks all right with the address, try searching the **Web for the site you're seeking.** Web sites move occasionally, **forwarding isn't perfect, and it isn't in effect forever.** And, just

as with people, eventually someone else moves in. If everything still checks out, consider the possibility that the site is simply down temporarily. Wait and try again later, but, if it **doesn't work after awhile, go back to your original source and check to make sure you have the correct URL.**

If, on the other hand, you can't get to any other sites either, the problem goes beyond a single bad address. In that case, start your troubleshooting with the browser and local machine. First, see whether other Web-enabled applications can access the Internet. If you use an email client such as Outlook or Windows Mail, see if it can send and receive. You can also try searching the iTunes Store or using a different browser (such as Google Chrome or Firefox) to see if they can connect. **Alternatively, open up Windows' command line interface and see if you can ping a common Internet address such as www.yahoo.com.** See the "Take Command" sidebar for more details on simple command line options. If other applications can access the Web, you have a problem with your browser—not with your connection. Check the **browser's settings (click Tools and Internet Options in Internet Explorer 8)** to see if a privacy, security, or other setting is preventing you from connecting to a given site. Simply closing and reopening the browser may **also do the trick.** If you're fine

after the restart, there was probably just something corrupted in the browser session and you can move merrily along.

Device Manager can confirm that your network adapter is still recognized by Windows and is functioning correctly.

Bad Connection

When no programs can get online, you have a larger connectivity problem. In that case, the single most likely solution is a simple reboot. There are all sorts of ways that a network connection can go bad, and restarting the machine resolves most of them. If a reboot fails to get you back online, dig **deeper into your PC's settings.** Check your firewall and security software. Is there an emergency lockdown, parental control, or some other setting preventing you from getting online? Check your hardware. Open Device Manager by right-clicking Computer (My Computer in Windows XP), choosing Manage, and clicking Device Manager. Here, make sure Windows recognizes your network adapter by right-

clicking it in the Device Manager list and choosing Properties. Look for any alerts or errors. Also, check the back of your PC. Is the network cable plugged in? Is the wireless antenna correctly positioned?

If you're connecting wirelessly, open the Windows wireless connection status screen (or your wireless adapter's custom software, if you use that instead) by double-clicking/clicking the Wireless Network Connection icon in Windows XP, Vista, or 7. Make sure you can see your wireless network and that you're connected.

You may need to disconnect and reconnect if your settings have changed or your wireless access point has been updated recently.

Wireless network adapters usually come with software that can help troubleshoot wireless network issues.

After running out of local machine options, expand your focus outward. Check the physical connection to your router, modem, and/or wall jack. See if you can access other computers or printers on your local network. Back in the browser, enter the IP address of your Internet gateway or network router (see the **manufacturer's documentation** for default settings). If you can

access the router's admin console but not public Internet sites, the problem lies with your external connection or modem instead of your machine or network. Look at the lights on all your networking devices. Is everything blinking (or not) as it should, in the appropriate colors? Most routers and modems are well-labeled, and the color codes are pretty intuitive. Solid green is always good. Anything red is almost always bad. Blinking can go either way. Again, check the **users guide if you're not sure what you should be looking for.**

Whether or not anything appears awry, cut the power to the modem and the router and restore power in that order. Just as with rebooting the PC, restarting network hardware will often resolve whatever problem **they're having. If you can't bring the connection back online, and you've confirmed that your internal network is working, call your ISP's (Internet service provider's) help desk. There may be a service outage in your area or they may be able to diagnose a problem specific to your line.**

by Gregory Anderson

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RAFFLE DETAILS



March's regular raffle will be for a:

LOGITECH® WEBCAM C200

System Requirements

Windows® XP (SP2 or higher)

- 1 GHz (1.6 GHz recommended)
- 256 MB RAM (512 MB RAM recommended)

Technical Specifications

- ◆ VGA sensor (640 x 480 pixels)
- ◆ Video capture: up to 640 x 480 pixels
- ◆ Photos: up to 1.3 megapixels (software enhanced)
- ◆ Video capture up to 30 frames per second (with recommended systems)
- ◆ Built-in microphone with **Logitech® RightSound™** technology
- ◆ Hi-Speed USB 2.0 certified
- ◆ Universal clip fits notebooks, LCD or CRT monitors
- ◆ Snapshot button for capturing photos
- ◆ Manual focus

You can see all the information at: http://www.logitech.com/Index.cfm/webcam_communications/webcams/devices/5865&cl=us.en

In part 1, I reviewed the history of my first network installation about 7 years ago, and the difficulties I encountered. Part 2 will cover all the work I did to essentially replace the old network, since the main wireless router had failed. For all practical purposes, the work involved now would have been the same as if this were a new network installation, starting from scratch.

THE PURPOSE OF A HOME NETWORK

The main purpose of most home networks is to share an internet connection among several computers. Using a wireless router typically provides 4 plug in ports for hard wired cable connections, and a receiver/transmitter which broadcasts the connection wirelessly, with a typical range of up to 300 feet, depending upon the router, the surroundings, walls, etc.. You can of course share files, printers, et al, should you wish to do so, but configuring this is done after the initial setup.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

First you will need a wireless router. The two current main varieties of routers are the “G” and “N” series. The “G” series wireless capability can handle up to 54 Mbps (megabits per second), and the “N” series is roughly twice as fast. But for home use, the “G” series hardware is more than fast enough for any high speed

cable modem connection. And the “G” series runs at 2.4 GHz, as opposed to a much higher frequency for the “N” series. Considering all the spec variables between “G” and “N”, I would recommend the “G” series, since it is also more readily compatible with earlier hardware types, especially “B”. I used a Linksys WRT54GL for this new install. The price range for this is in the \$70 region, depending upon your choice of vendors.

This router comes with an installation CD. Just run the CD, and follow the instructions which are plainly and clearly presented. In the areas of security, I would accept the suggestions made along the way. You will have to establish some passwords et al, and connect things up as directed. From what I've seen, most routers today come with a good install CD. Before you buy your router, check to make sure that is the case for the unit you choose.

There may be one window which comes up along the way, where there are fields to be filled in re IP addresses, gateways, etc.. But the one key item to be selected is the choice of static or dynamic IP addresses. In most instances, such as Comcast, dynamic IP addresses are used, and when that choice is made in the window, all the other fields disappear, making life that much easier. Locate the router as high up as possible.

A computer cable modem is required. But if you already have an Internet service provider, you already have the necessary modem in place and working. For a number of years, I rented the cable modem, for \$5 per month on my Comcast cable bill. You are allowed to purchase your own modem, which I did, and save the monthly charge. A suitable Motorola cable modem will cost in the \$40-\$55 region, and will quickly pay for itself. Of course, if you own it, you are responsible for it. Cable modems seem to have very long life however.

Several lengths of Ethernet Cat-5 cable with RJ-45 connectors

You will need one length to connect the cable modem to the wireless router, and then another length to connect the router to your computer. You can of course have all your computers run via a wireless adapter. But it is usually better to have your “main” computer hard wired to the router. However, if your cable modem is in a location which is not convenient for this, all computers can run in the wireless mode. Most routers come with one length of cable. If you need more, CompUSA is as good place as any to go. Even Office Depot may carry the needed cables.

WIRELESS USB ADAPTERS AS NEEDED

For any computer that does not already have a wireless capability, you will have to buy a wireless adapter(s). These are small units ranging from the size of a flash drive to a few inches square, with a USB connector on them. Some have a captive short USB cable already built in. They **should be mounted in a "free space area" preferably on the wall**, and above the desktop to obtain the best reception, and connected to a USB port on the computer involved. Again, these days, most adapters come with an installation CD, which is usually run first - then follow the instructions as they appear.

Once you get the wireless computer running on the network, check the signal strength. There should be a small icon in the right taskbar area indicating you are connected online. Double clicking it will bring up a window, and there should be a display there with a series of green bars (hopefully). This shows wireless the signal strength. One bar is marginal, but usable. Three bars is very good, and four or five bars is excellent. If your signal strength is low, try moving/repositioning the adapter, or router, if possible.

IF ALL IS NOT WORKING, WHEN ALL IS DONE - NOW WHAT

After I connected everything, and followed all the steps I

outlined, my main computer (hard wired) was connected very solidly to the Internet. I had also taken my old wireless signal booster, and added it into the new system, on top of the new router, as it was fully compatible.

I went to my number 2 computer, which already had a wireless adapter installed in it via a PCI card. It had good received signal strength, but no Internet connection. So I started browsing around in the various XP network connection windows. I saw some strange numbers in some of the windows, and they were absolutely wrong. I questioned how I had ever gotten it onto the Internet in the past, but I usually did, although with occasional glitches. But try as I might, I could not get things working there. So I decided to download the 7 day trial version of Network Magic. Go to this site and read all about Network Magic

<http://www.purenetworks.com/product/pro.php>

I installed Network Magic on my main machine, which was working nicely on the Internet, and on my number 2 machine. I then clicked on a choice in Network Magic which said **"connect to the Internet"**. I clicked, and in about 2 seconds, a confirmation window came up saying all was OK. And indeed it was - I didn't have to do anything. Three cheers for Network Magic.

Then I went to my #3 desktop

machine where I had been using BOINGO - the free software program that Linksys had referred me to 7 years ago. I uninstalled that software, and also removed the old Linksys USB wireless adapter that had given me 1 bar of signal strength over the years. I installed a new wireless adapter which the CompUSA salesman had suggested I use. It was a refurbished NetGear unit, about the size of a flash drive, and it sold for \$15, instead of the typical \$40-50 for a new adapter. It came with a note telling me where to go online at the NetGear site to download the install file for this adapter. I did so, and installed the software, then connected the unit as directed. Immediately I was on line, and I had 4 bars of signal strength. I never had such a strong signal before, and with no real work on my part.

Lastly, I powered up my Acer laptop with its built in wireless capability, and as usual, I didn't have to do anything here - it immediately was on, with a very strong signal strength.

Windows has all the necessary features to arrange for file and printer sharing. But, one has to know where to look for them, and how to set them up. And when sharing files, the protocols in XP are not as clean and simple as doing this via Network Magic. It took me about 10 seconds to designate one folder on my main machine

as a shared folder, and it immediately was accessible by all my other machines. Sharing a printer was just as easy. Amazing what a fine piece of software can do with no bumps along the way.

PURCHASING NETWORK MAGIC

I was so impressed with Network Magic, and all thing things it offered, that I immediately went online, and purchased the Pro version. Even though I had a Linksys router, and many of the trial software features would still remain working forever because of that, I wanted 4 computers to use the program, and I wanted file and possibly printer sharing. At \$39, I consider the program worth every penny, especially when I saw what it did for me when I couldn't initially get my number 2 machine connected to the Internet. If I had Network Magic back 7 years ago, I would not have had to spend over a week working at getting my 2 machines functioning on the network.

Written by Ron Hirsch, Member & Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida
www.brcs.org

Hirsch, Ron . "Ron Hirsch Special Series." "Networking for Dummies (part 2 of 2)" *Boca Raton Computer Society*. Retrieved on Web. 26 Jan. 2010. From
http://www.brcs.org/PDF/networking_for_dummies_part2.pdf >
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Note: you can see larger/clearer images of the screen shots in the original article sited, just click the link above.

Below are some screen shots of several of the windows in Network Magic.

This is a MAP of the network, showing all the elements on this network.



This screen shows a listing of the various tasks which Network Magic can perform.



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

There will be a Question & Answer
Session starting at 1PM.
Bring any questions you have about
your computer or problems you may
be having. It will be conducted by:
Neal Shipley & Art Bendick

Notice

The next meeting of the Sauk
Computer User Group will be

Mar 13, 2010

Question & Answer: 1:00 P.M.

Business: 2:00 P.M.

Program: 2:30 P.M.

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

MARCH'S MEETING THEME: HOW TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR
DESKTOP BY TERRY MACLENNAN