Club Information

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Member of

An International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups

JANUARY 12, 2019 MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING

The January 12, 2019 meeting began with a visit from Iggy the therapy dog from CGH sponsored by SCUG. Iggy is a 9-year-old 6 ½ pound Maltese. She is a very friendly dog and members enjoyed her visit. President Bendick welcomed members to the meeting with question and answers next. President Bendick welcomed one guest, Joyce Stogentin, from Grand Detour to the meeting. The treasurers report was given and approved.

The Museum of Science and Industry turned down the old computer from Don Haag but it was an honor that it was even considered. No old business. New business, our member Cheryl Johnson was welcomed back and brought a very nice picture of Sam and their dogs. Cheryl attached a chocolate treat to the picture for members to enjoy in memory of Sam. The officers for 2019 were nominated and elected.

President Art Bendick, Vice President Neal Shipley, Treasurer Joe Fornero, Secretary Gloria Schneider (**Editor's note:** she was not there and later declined). Members at large elected were Cheryl Johnson, Glenda MacLennan, Joe Schmitt, Terry MacLennan and Tom Rich. Glenda is our trip coordinator and she had no report this month. Terry gave a short report on the Computer Lab, Terry does not need to buy new computers he is using computers on hand and may sell two or three computers from the lab. Meeting adjourned.

The program was information on Disaster Preparation. He advised making a list of all vital papers and items of importance and where they are kept in case of an emergency and you may only have minutes to evacuate your home. The drawing was held next.

Respectfully submitted by Darla Stigall, club secretary

HELPING OTHERS INTERGRATE TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR DAILY LIVES

BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 16, 2019

Drawing for February

The January board meeting was held at Kopper Kitchen, Sterling Northland Mall, at 6:00 PM. Attending were President Art Bendick, Vice President Neal Shipley, Treasurer Joe Fornero, Members at Large Glenda MacLennan, Terry MacLennan, Tom Rich and Joe Schmitt.

Our club badly needs to fill the officer position of Secretary. (**Editor's note**: Tom Rich was to ask Nancy if she would take the position and she said yes.)

Joe Fornero made a motion to purchase Quicken 2019, 1 license for 2 years, software for Treasurer's use for $64. Glenda second the motion and the motion was approved.

We discussed options for adding a printer to the club computer during club meetings. A decision was made to use a flash drive and print from the public printer.

Upcoming monthly themes will be Feb. by Terry MacLennan; Deep/ Dark Web

 Mar. by John Miller; A Surprise Topic

 Apr. by Neal Shipley; Tips on Microsoft Word

Respectively submitted by Joe Schmitt

We will still have 3 more Amazon Fires as large prizes, but you can also chose a $50 gift certificate from either Galena Steak House or Candlelight. Only one of the above given out and you can only win a large prize once per year. Smaller prizes will include a $25 gift card from Walmart, Menards or Pizza Ranch. Two awarded each month along with a 256 Gb 3.0 flash drive and other misc. items and you can win them as often as your ticket is drawn, but only one per month.

A mom texts, "Hi! Son, what does IDK, LY, & TTYL mean?" He texts back, "I Don't Know, Love You, & Talk To You Later." The mom texts him, "It's ok, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister, love you too."

Dan's Desk: Defragmentation Tools
By Dan Douglas

In the days of XP PCs, both the size and the physical engineering of the hard drives, made the process of defragmenting result in measurable performance improvements. The older relatively expense hard drives (I remember when $1/MB was considered a good buy! Compared to the $.025/GB ofered today) resulted in heavily used space with a low amount of free space in most PCs. When the amount of free space is low, a fle cannot be written in a contiguous manner, especially if a drive has fragments of files throughout the entire area of the disk. This causes all read and write operations to that file to take longer to complete as the drive must read or write sections of the file from or to multiple areas of the disk. So buying a larger drive would result in more free space, at least initially, until the free space on that drive also became used up.

To help address this issue, the hard drive physical read/write mechanisms were also re-engineered. From the earliest hard drives in 1956 until 2005, most drives read and wrote in a longitudinal manner. That is, it placed the data in a long row. If the disk was fragmented, then that row had to be placed in sections of the disk areas that were not together. This would take longer to access since the platters of the disk had to rotate to allow the read/write heads to read each section that made up

the entire fle. In 2005 Hitachi pioneered the new read/write process by switching to perpendicular heads. This meant the heads would write data on different platters simultaneously in a perpendicular manner. So if your disk had four platters, each platter had a dedicated read/write head.

The amount of time to rotate the disk meant that each head could be collecting data in a fraction of the time. Even if a file was fragmented, the time required to read/write each section was greatly reduced.

You had to manually setup a schedule for the built-in defragmenting utility to run and remember to leave your PC on at the scheduled time. After Windows Vista/7/8/10 came out, the built-in defragmenting tool has been automatically run by the OS itself. 3rd party defragmentation tools have offered a few minor benefits over the built-in version included with Windows, but usually came with a dollar cost to the user.

If you are a user of SSDs (Solid State Drives – see my column from the August Journal to learn more), then you should actually turn defragmentation OFF. Windows 7/8/10 will automatically disable disk defragmentation on SSD drives because SSDs perform extremely well on random read operations. Defragmenting files on SSDs isn't helpful enough to warrant the

added disk writing defragmentation produces which results in a reduced lifespan of the SSD.

But here's the bottom line: Over the years, as hard drives have gotten much faster at both sequential and random reads and writes, the usefulness of defragging has dropped. Your hard drive 15 years ago only had to be partially fragmented to cause system slowdown, but these days, it'll require a very fragmented drive to make that happen. Another factor are the giant hard drives in modern computers, which have enough free space that Windows doesn't have to fragment your files in order to write them to the drive. With SSDs, do not even think about it! Save your defragmentation tool money and buy an SSD instead, to really get a performance hit that you can see.

If you have suggestions for other topics like this, that you would like to see explained, please let me k–now!

Meet the new Gmail
By Nancy Demarte

Gmail is a popular email service for good reason. Located in the cloud, it can be accessed from any computer, smartphone, or tablet. Once you get familiar with the interface, it is simple to use. A few months ago, I began to notice little changes to my Gmail screen. Some things were moved; others were new. After a brief search, I found that Gmail is involved in a big makeover which began in the spring of 2018. Gmail users are getting features as they become available, although everyone is not getting them at the same time. Here are a few of the changes that are included:
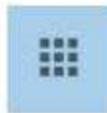
Moves and Changes

1. The Contacts list has been moved from Gmail to the center of the Google app grid. Click the grid (top right of Gmail screen) to open it. This change has frustrated users looking to add or edit a contact. When composing an email, though, Gmail still lists relevant Contacts when you begin to add a name.

2. The Google calendar icon has been added to the right side of the Gmail screen. Now you can add events or reminders to it without leaving Gmail.

3. When composing a message, you will now find four options for text size: Small, Normal, Large, and Huge. To set your personal font, size, and text color, go to Settings (Gear icon > Settings) and find the "Default Text Style" heading. Click the "Remove Formatting" icon (right end of toolbar), then set your preferences using the down arrows. To save changes in Settings, scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Save Changes.
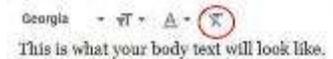
4. If you want to forward or reply to all recipients in the new Gmail, skip the reverse arrow in the top right corner of the message. That sets up a Reply only to the sender. Instead, click the three vertical dots icon next to the arrow and make your choice.

Meet the new Gmail (cont.)

New Gmail Main Menu (left side of screen)

Most of these commands are familiar to anyone who has used Gmail. To save space, however, only the icons are visible until you move your mouse over them. Then the list opens to include the icon names. You can make it stay open by clicking the 3-lined icon in the top left corner of the screen, as shown.

New Gmail Icons & Features (right side of screen)

Google uses a lot of icons. The tiniest of them can have the biggest functions. To see what an icon means, hover your mouse pointer over it without clicking, and its name will appear, sometimes with more information. To use one of the features below, click it, and it opens as a right sidebar.

Google Calendar lets you view or edit your calendar without leaving Gmail.

Keep lets you make notes and share them with others.

Use **Tasks** to create a To Do list and check off items as they get done.

Get Add-ons takes you to the G Suite Marketplace which has add-on features and apps you might like.
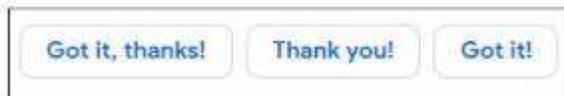
Ten New or Updated Gmail Features – Available Now or Coming Soon

1. Smart Replies: These are canned, informal replies which appear at the bottom of some emails. When in a hurry, click one and send it as your reply.

2. Snooze: Snooze lets you remove an email from the Inbox and return it after a time you set, such as 'tomorrow'. It is useful for emails that you want to answer at a later time.

3. Nudge: When enabled, this function will suggest emails that you should reply to or sent mails to follow up on. Go to Settings to enable or disable it.

4. Confidential Mode: These functions are designed to increase security. You can set a message to self-destruct at a specific time, or you can send an email that requires the recipient to enter a code before opening it.

5. Importance Markers: Google determines which messages are "important" by putting a gold arrow next to them. In this sample from my Inbox, I clicked the star to show that I also considered it important.

6. Smart Compose: This feature is similar to the tablet or smartphone "auto-complete" function. As you type a message, and a few grayed out words

Meet the new Gmail (cont.)

complete the thought. If you like these words, just keep typing over them. If not, type something else. You must enable this feature in Settings.

7. Labels: Labels (much like folders) are found in classic Gmail but now have new icons. You can create labels (travel, personal, etc.) and put emails into them. Just open an email to reveal the icon group shown. Click the 'Label' icon to view the labels list or create a new label. To move an email into a label, click the Label icon, check the box next to a label, and click Apply. Click the 'Move To' icon to get extra labels, like Spam or Trash.

Label Icons outlined in red: 1.Move to 2. Label

8. Offline Support: We know we can't send or receive email without the internet. But Gmail computer users can now compose, open or read Gmail when not on the internet. The Mobile Gmail version already has this capability.

9. Assisted Unsubscribe: This feature targets people who have online subscriptions to newsletters and other regular columns which come via email. If you don't open one of your newsletters often, Gmail will bring up a notice that lets you unsubscribe.

10. Improved Spam Warnings: Gmail has always popped up a notice when you try to open an email known to be unsafe. The new Gmail has larger warnings with colors based on the level of danger. Gray means Suspicious; Red indicates Dangerous.

Many of the new features can help you keep your mail organized or save time, but I found a few of them annoying. For example, I'm not sure I want to be "nudged" every time I wait too long to open an email. Fortunately, most features can be enabled, disabled or hidden in Settings. A tip: Don't ignore the little icons which can be crucial to make Gmail function the way you want it to.

To find out if you already have the new Gmail, open Gmail and click the Settings icon. If the top line says, "Go back to classic Gmail," you have the new version. You can click that line and return to the old Gmail. Since you can do this at any time, consider trying out the new version for a while before you decide whether to keep it.

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL

October 2018 issue, STUG Monitor

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Use Your Computer to Write a Memoir
By Keith Connes

Here's a way to use your computer to create a legacy: Write a memoir. It doesn't matter whether you are a beginning writer or a seasoned pro – or even if you don't consider yourself to be a writer at all. Write a memoir to present the gift of your inner self to your family, friends, and perhaps a wider audience. You might find that you've acquired a new hobby!

A memoir can give your loved ones a greater insight into who you are and how you got to become the person you are – your thoughts, your feelings, your adventures through life, and the things you learned along the way.

Let me be clear as to what I mean by "memoir." Some people may think of that word "memoir" as meaning an autobiography. Well, yes, an autobiography is a very extensive memoir, taking in the entire life of the subject, but a memoir can also be just a small nugget of that person's existence – a series of reminiscences, or even a single recollection. So, it's not that daunting a task.

Even so, would your memoir really be that valuable to others? Well, think of somebody who is important to you, be it a spouse, relative, or friend – and even though you've known that person for years, you sense that there are aspects of her or his life that you don't know about and wish you did. Not necessarily skeletons in the closet, but – well, wouldn't it be fun to know that Mom always wanted to be a trapeze artist, but somehow never got around to it?

My best friend since high school was, for most of his adult life, a sales executive whose high-powered drive enabled him to start up and run several insurance companies. I thought I knew him pretty well, but I was astonished when he sent me a book of sensitive and lovely poetry that he had written! I saw an aspect of Frank I had never suspected, and my respect and admiration for him became even greater.

Well, you may not be a secret poet, or even a wannabe trapeze artist, but aren't there some unrevealed parts of you that you wouldn't mind sharing, but you haven't gotten around to it, or maybe you're just a little shy about it?

Write it down. Write your memoir. One of the easiest ways to get it done is to use speech recognition software (some of it is free) and possibly a compatible recorder. The software automatically converts your spoken words into a text file, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.

Here are a few basics about getting comfortable with the dictation process: Just start talking and don't worry about grammar or punctuation – you can fix it later. If it would help get the thoughts flowing, sit down with someone you feel relaxed with and record the conversation as you chat about a topic for your memoir.

Regardless of where your memoir begins, it can take on a life of its own – because it is, after all, the life of your own.

Write your memoir. Do it for the ones you love, for yourself, and maybe for some great-great-grandchildren you will never know. But through your memoir, they will get to know you.

There will be a half hour Question & Answer session starting at 1 PM. Bring any questions you have about your computer or problems you may be having. It will be conducted by:
Art Bendick & Neal Shipley
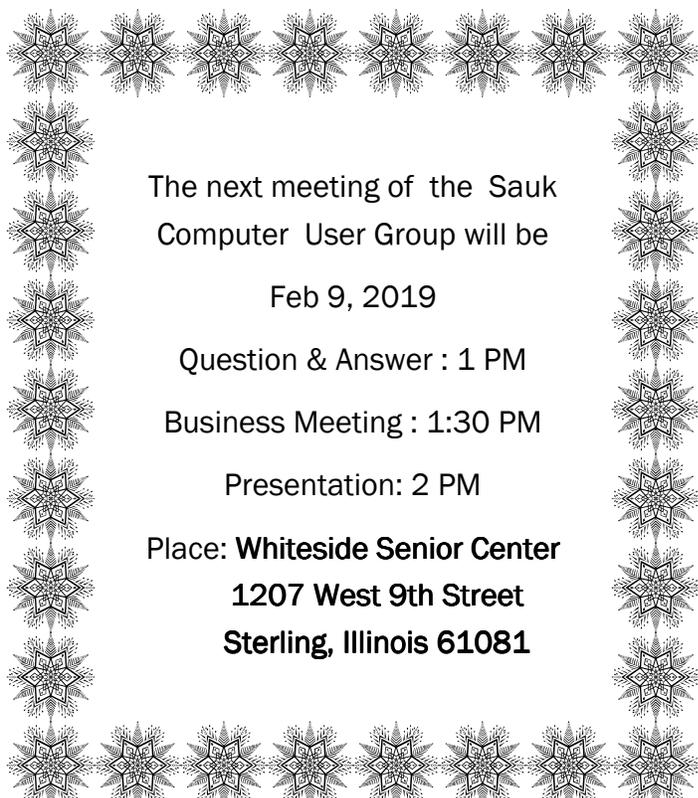
The next meeting of the Sauk Computer User Group will be

Feb 9, 2019

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Business Meeting : 1:30 PM

Presentation: 2 PM

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

FEBRUARY PRESENTATION WILL BE A PRESENTATION ON THE DEEP/DARK WEB BY TERRY MACLENNAN