



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NOVEMBER RAFFLE SCUG OUTREACH PROJECT	2
THOSE PESKY CRASHING COMPUTERS	3
MR MODEM'S TASTY TIPS	4-5
IBM LOTUS	6
READER'S TIPS	7-8
THE STATE OF REBATES	9

Joe Fornero started this month's gathering with the packing of boxes for the Christmas Child project. He always has a great assortment of items to put in each boy or girl box and it takes a little maneuvering to get everything packed into one of the boxes that he also contributes.

The Question and Answer period was conducted by John and Art.

The business meeting was conducted by President Neal. As was mentioned in the newsletter, Joe found a great deal on a used projector for the club. It is a Nec MT1065. Originally the MSRP was \$4,249. It even comes with a 2 year extended warranty. The

members voted to approve it at a price of \$322.47. Terry offered to do a short demo on using Internet Radio at a future meeting and members voiced their approval. The raffle was then held with several nice prizes won.

John Miller had a good audience for his presentation on Internet search programs. I found it very **interesting because I'm one of those** who is afraid to try anything new just in case I mess up my computer any more than it already is! Thank you, John.

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

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Joe Fornero

MINUTES: CLUB BOARD MEETING OCT 13, 2009

The meeting was held at Angela's home. Present were Joe Fornero, Don Haag, Joe Schmitt, Myron Kliment, Tom Cartwright, Neal Shipley, Terry MacLennan and Angela Rester.

There was discussion on the possible purchase of a new video card so that we can get **optimum performance from the club's** new projector.

Upcoming programs include Angela in Nov, Joe in Dec and Art in Jan.

Tom Cartwright brought a computer, that he had purchased over the Internet, to show and evaluate. After a short discussion on it, it was moved and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by
Angela Rester, club secretary

NOVEMBER RAFFLE

The raffle for November will include a 3 cell LED flashlight along with a number of other items. The club has a large and **XL men's white and black polo shirt and a women's medium dark blue polo shirt** with the club logo embroidered on them if anyone is interest in purchasing any-one of them please contact Terry or Myron at the Senior Center or at next **month's meeting.**

SCUG OUTREACH PROJECT

I would like to thank everyone who participated in packing a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child. I never know how many to prepare and I brought 30 boxes. You overwhelmed me this year and finished them before the start of the question and answer time. There were 33 boxes paid for and I will add 10 more, so the club will be sending 43 boxes to make some children very happy. Thanks again for your support to bringing smiles to children who have very little. Santa Joe will have lots of items at the Christmas meeting and hope you and whoever you bring with you will also receive an extra smile this year.

Joe Fornero



THOSE PESKY CRASHING COMPUTERS

(Unless your goal is to help the aging economy and/or

a legacy system computer scrounger like me, don't do it)

If you don't already know it, computers do not crash. They just stop working for various reasons.

Recently (during the last several months and often times before) I realized my "crashed computer" problem was the result of a "faulty" power connector. You know, those little four connector things. Made up of four little split tubes loosely packed into a white plastic block with several wires coming out the backside of it.

I erroneously used to think after moving this around and getting it to fit snugly onto a four pin male connector it became a satisfactory joint, but not necessarily so.

Part of the blame might be due to a law

passed some thirty years ago, the use of beryllium copper, in most instances was stopped. Why? Because there were cases in which some workers were overcome by breathing in the poisonous fumes generated during machining processes.

"So what does this have to do with it?" you might say. Well, beryllium copper is just about the best spring material that, I at least believe, has ever been used.

The spring back characteristic far exceeds that of any other electrical carrying material now used in spring contacts. Although other materials such as phosphor bronze are adequate, this is so only if the connecting units are aligned and not subjected to too many stressing cycles. Should spring pressure between matching units become

too low electrical resistance between the two will become excessive and in turn over-heat a circuit to the point of triggering a fused shutdown.

I now have found that taking a small blade knife I am able to reform those little split tubes to make them tighter in a connector suspected to have relaxed their hold on the mating pins.

Remember; it only takes one of the four little split tubes to lose it's gripping power to shut down a system and even though the connector seems tight, such might not be the case.

Don Haag

(Or if you are willing to spend about a \$1, go to hardware store and buy a new outlet and replace the old one.)

VINTAGE COMPUTER HUMOR

My kids love surfing the Web, and they keep track of their passwords by writing them on Post-it notes. I noticed their Disney password was "MickeyMinnieGoofyPluto," and so I asked why it was so long.

"Because," my son explained, "they say it has to have at least four characters."

Mr. Modem's Desktop

Tasty Tips

Freshly picked from my hydroponic hothouse comes this fall's early harvest of organic offerings.

Each of the following digital sprouts was lovingly grown in pesticide-free compost composed of my previous columns. Bon appétit!

If you insert photos or other graphics in your Microsoft Word documents, you may occasionally need to reduce the size of some images. One convenient way to do that is to first create a text box by clicking Insert and Text Box (choose Simple Text Box in Word 2007), then copy and paste your picture into it. The image will automatically resize to fit within the confines of the text box.

Want an easy way to determine the size of a file or folder? Select the item, press ALT-ENTER, then look on the General tab.

Use the little "book" icon located at the bottom of your Word document window to jump to your first spelling error—in the unlikely event you have a spelling error, of course. If the icon displays an X, Word has detected a misspelled word or grammatically challenged sentence. Click it (double-click in Word 2003) to move to the offending text. You can right-click the book icon in Word

2003 to configure your spelling and grammar options.

If you're a smoker, try to avoid smoking while at the keyboard. Tars and nicotine cling to internal components, which can result in shortening the useful life of your system (of the computer, also) and cause overheating and even connectivity problems. Smoking releases tar and other yuck (from the Latin *Yuckus Disgustus*) into the air. These particles are sticky and will adhere to the fan and other electronics within your PC.

If your mouse has a scroll wheel, try pressing it while viewing a document or Web page. Does a strange little icon appear on-screen? If **so, don't be frightened.** The appearance of that icon means that you have enabled automatic scrolling. Congratulations. To scroll what appears on-screen, all you have to do is move your mouse. No exhausting, finger cramp-inducing clicking is required. To return to **"normal" mode, press the** mouse wheel again, and the scrolling icon will disappear. **This doesn't work with all** mice, but give it a try if it

sounds fascinating, intriguing, or if you're simply desperate for something to do.

Clicking the tiny Maximize button located in the upper-right corner of any window can be a challenge for many of my bifocular brethren and cistern. For a larger target, double-click **a window's Title bar** instead, to maximize a window. Double-click it a second time to restore the window to its previous size.

KeepMyMarbles.com is an online vault that uses 256-bit encryption to protect your important and not-so-important documents. No software is required, other than your browser. Registration is as simple as providing a username, password, first and last name (**"Elvis Avoca-do" here**), and email address. I've been using this site for several months and have found it to be free, secure, and very easy to use. **That's a tough combination** to beat.

When Vista is installed, it begins building an index of all files, which results in

faster file searches. That's the good news. Unfortunately, it also has the ability to slow your computer down to a molasses-like crawl while it's indexing. To avoid this emotionally devastating situation, disable the indexer by going to the Control Panel, System and Maintenance, And Administrative Tools. Double-click Services and then scroll through the list, right-click Windows Search, and click Properties. Under Services Status, click the Stop button. Choose Disable from the Startup Type drop-down menu and click Apply and OK.

If you use Outlook Express and want to hide multiple recipients of an email, you probably know that you have to place those addresses in the Bcc field. By default, however, OE only displays the To and Cc fields. How thoughtless! To display the Bcc field when composing a message, click View, All Headers.

When you send a message containing Bcc recipients, the copy in your Sent Items folder will not display them. If you need to check your Bcc recipients at a later time, with the message open, click File, Properties, and then the Details tab. That will display the raw source data for the message, including your Bcc recipients.

Over time, your formerly neat and tidy, alphabetized Windows XP Start, Programs list may deteriorate into a combination alphabetical and chronological mess—or what I call alphalogical or chronobetical order. To restore some semblance of tidiness, click Start, Programs or All Programs, then right-click any item in the list. From the menu that appears, click **Sort By Name. It's as easy as A-B-C.**

Have a great month ahead, and **I'll meet you back here in** (gasp) October.

Mr. Modem (Richard Sherman)

is an author, syndicated columnist, radio host, and publisher.

"Mr. Modem's Weekly Newsletter" provides personal responses to subscribers' computer and Internet questions, plus weekly computing tips, Web site recommendations, virus alerts, hoax warnings, and more. For additional information, visit www.MrModem.com

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Make Your Cell Phone Battery Last Longer: If your battery won't hold a charge very well or you don't always have access to a charger, there are a few things you can do to stretch your battery's charge time. When you're not using your phone, turn it off, unless you are expecting an important call. If you are in an area without service, turn your phone off so it isn't searching for signals. If you want to leave your phone on, you can also change a few settings on the phone to save battery. Turn your phone's vibrate feature off and use a basic ringtone on low volume. Also, turn your backlight off, as it will take up excessive battery power. Features like Bluetooth, Internet, cameras, etc. will drain the battery you have left, so try to use these features only when you absolutely need them.

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IBM LOTUS SYMPHONY

By Terry MacLennan

Rob Toole of Unique Computer recently put me on to a free download from IBM of a fully modernized version of the old Lotus Symphony program which is based on the OpenOffice.org Technology and supports the ODF standard, ISO 26300.

IBM® Lotus® Symphony™ is a richly-featured set of productivity tools that are intuitive and easy to use and provided at no charge. There are three applications that make up Lotus Symphony: Lotus Symphony Documents, Lotus Symphony Spreadsheets and Lotus Symphony Presentations.

Lotus Symphony can be extended with numerous plug-ins to integrate and enhance a wide range of applications.

ChartShare allows you to quickly and easily share slides with other people. This is done by sharing a URL.

Convert spreadsheet to html plug-in can convert spreadsheet document to html format.

Organization Chart plug-in is used to generate organization charts in Symphony Presentation.

The Lotus Symphony Calculator plug-in is a calculator built right into Symphony. Do everything a standard calculator can do and more without leaving your Symphony workspace or switching windows.

SmartDraw is software that helps you work smarter by communicating visually.

The Knocker game plug-in is a small game played on Lotus Symphony spreadsheet.

The IBM Lotus Symphony SideNote plug-in adds capabilities to store little pieces of text temporarily. SideNote displays in the sidebar and consists entirely of a large text area.

These are just a few examples of the plug-ins that are currently available.

Available for download at [http://
symphony.lotus.com/
software/lotus/symphony/
home.nsf/home](http://symphony.lotus.com/software/lotus/symphony/home.nsf/home)

Readers' Tips

Many of our readers come across fast, easy ways to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Well, we'd like to hear about it! If you have a great tip you'd like to share, email us at

readertips@smartcomputing.com.

If we print your tip, we'll send you a free *Smart Computing* T-shirt. You'll be the envy of all (well, some) of your friends. Please include your first name, last name, and address so that we can give you credit if we print your tip. (And so that we can send your T-shirt to you, of course.) Please limit your tip to 200 words or fewer. Not all tips received will be printed, and tips may be edited for length and clarity.

Create A File List

Want a quick and easy way to make a record of the files in a particular folder? Select all the files in the folder (press CTRL-A) and then right-click any file. Choose Send To and select Mail Recipient, which will open your default email client. Your email client produces a list of the files in the body of the email. Then, you can copy and

paste the list to a word processing application or any other application you choose.

Alfred M., Inverness, Fla.

Organize Your Documentation

When I ran into PC problems, I never seemed to be able to locate the papers or booklets for particular software or hardware. To organize the material, I bought a spiral binder with plastic pockets, and in each pocket, I place the individual manuals and other pertinent information. You can **also include the hardware's or software's installation discs** inside the pockets. For the games I play, I created a separate folder for my notes and booklets—no more lost information.

Suzann G.

Email-Sized Images

If you're looking to reduce the size of a photo for the purposes of email, the Paint application included with Windows XP and Windows Vista is perfect. Paint can be found in the Accessories menu (click Start, All Programs, Accessories, and Paint). Once you open the

file in Paint, select the Image menu and click Stretch/Skew. In the Stretch section, reduce the percentages—make sure to use the same proportion—in the Horizontal and Vertical fields. Click OK and **check the image's physical and file size.** If the size isn't what you want, click the Edit menu, select Undo, and repeat the resize steps as needed. Rather than saving over the original image, click the File menu, select Save As, and append the original file name **with an "em" to indicate that it's an email-sized photo.**

Sheila M., Atlanta, Ga.

Unprintable PDF Files

Occasionally, I receive emails with PDF (Portable Document Format) attachments that I would like to print out. In some cases, the File menu does not include a Print option, but **there's a Copy option (it's also in File menu).** If so, select Copy and then paste the text into a blank word processing document, and you can print off a copy of the information.

Chuck F., Atlanta, Ga.

READERS' TIPS (CONT.)

Keep Your Window Size

It can sometimes be annoying to resize a window each time you open an application in Windows Vista. If you have a preferred size and location, resize the application to the desired dimension when it's in the Restore Down mode and press F11 before closing the window. (Restore Down mode is the middle option in the upper-right corner of a window between the Minimize and Close options.) Note that this command does make the window full-screen, but it also keeps the program in the same dimension you had before it maximized. The next time you open the application, Windows Vista will open the application at your preferred dimension. You can accomplish the same thing in Windows XP by holding the CTRL key when closing a window.

Dieter S., Vineland, Ontario

Troubleshooting Tip

Before you begin troubleshooting a problem (and possibly changing important settings), it's a good idea to set a restore point **using Windows' System Restore. I find that it's handy** to create a shortcut to System Restore on your Desktop because it helps me remember to run it before I make changes to my computer. To add System Restore to your Desktop, click the Start button, choose All Programs, select Accessories, select System Tools, and right-click System Restore. Select Send To and Desktop (Create Shortcut), and now you can run System Restore from your Desktop.

Barbara S., Birmingham, Ala.

Save Tax Documents In Digital Form

Rather than filing away the

paper copies of my annual income tax, which can take up a lot of room in the safe deposit box, I scan the documents and save them to a folder on my PC. After I file the returns in April, I copy the documents, including the tax return itself, to a CD-R and place the disc in the safe deposit box. To simplify the work needed in April, I scan each document, such as 1099 forms and mortgage interest statements, as soon as I receive them.

Bill W., Vero Beach, Fla.

Compiled by Nathan Lake

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THE STATE OF REBATES: HAS RELIABILITY IMPROVED?

BY RICK BROIDA

FROM CNET'S THE CHEAPSKATE BLOG

This morning I was going to post a [Fantom 500GB eSATA/USB external hard drive for \\$44.99 shipped](#)--but then I saw the \$20 mail-in rebate that's required to get that price.

Rebates. I know from reading nearly two years' worth of comments that many of you hold them in the same regard as telemarketing and tax audits.

Indeed, it's the rare rebate-oriented post that doesn't draw at least one "rebates are a scam!" response.

But are they? Many years back, rebates started earning a deservedly bad reputation owing to woefully complicated forms, delayed or unfulfilled claims, and at least a few disreputable fulfillment companies.

That was then. Today, I think

it's safe to say that rebates are easier to deal with (some let you complete the forms online, track status on a Web site, etc.), and it's been ages since I've heard of any major controversies.

This begs the question: Here in late 2009, how do you feel about rebates? Have things improved? Do you trust rebate deals more than you used to? Is it worth jumping through a few hoops to get a check for \$20? \$50? More?

Or, do you still think they're scams, a pain in the neck, not worth the hassle?

Whatever your opinion, I'd love to hear some real-world background. If you've gotten a raw rebate deal recently, tell me about it! Or if you've had a great rebate experience, let's hear about that, too. Keep it current if

you can; we're talking about the status of rebate deals in 2009, not 2005.

As I've mentioned before, I've never had a problem with a rebate. And while my preference is for instant-gratification coupon codes, I don't mind the minor inconvenience of filling in a form, cutting out a UPC, and mailing an envelope if there's at least \$10 hanging in the balance.

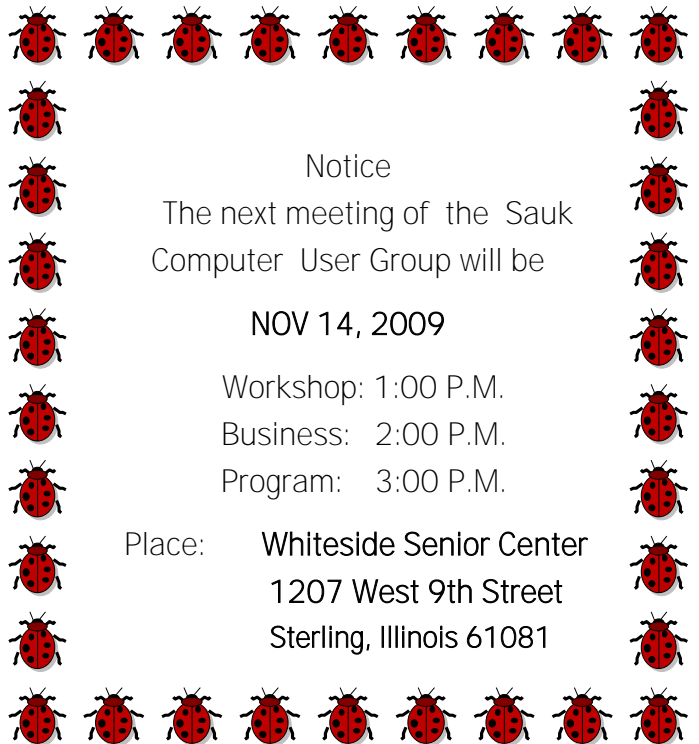
You?

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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

NOV 14, 2009

Workshop: 1:00 P.M.

Business: 2:00 P.M.

Program: 3:00 P.M.

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

NOVEMBER'S MEETING THEME: CARD PROGRAM USING WORD
BY ANGELA RESTER