



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION  
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

FEBRUARY 2010

VOLUME TWENTY  
NUMBER TWO

MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2009

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President Neal Shipley and Art Bendick conducted the Question and Answer period of the new year's first meeting which was then followed by the business part of the meeting.

Guests and new members were introduced, after which the newsletter was accepted as published.

Myron then presented his treasurer's report and it also was accepted as read.

Darla Stigall was thanked for her presentation of the meat and cheese tray for the Christmas party and Santa Joe Fornero was thanked for his efforts in conducting the games. He promises to have no Grinch-related questions this coming year.

Nominations for officers were closed, with the present slate nominated for another year with only minor changes in the board members-at-large.

The meeting adjourned and was followed by the raffle of some interesting prizes.

After a short break, Art proceeded to explain the different things he loaded onto the Christmas DVD. He had so many things to include that he put them on a DVD instead of his usual CD and he had a few for purchase and will prepare more if needed. Everyone applauded him for his very welcome efforts.

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 JAN 12, 2009

Members of the SCUG Board met at President Neal's home. Present were Neal Shipley, Myron Kliment, Tom Cartwright, Joe Fornero, Jim Wesner, Terry MacLennan and Angela.

A listing of the membership was discussed and also the possibility of cutting out the printed newsletter .

Possible upcoming programs were brought up and it was suggested they and answers to questions in the Q&A section of the meetings be presented at a more basic level so that even new members will be able to understand the subject matter.

The free subscriptions given to the club by a computer magazine were discussed and it was decided to keep one to extend the club subscription to be able to continue having an issue as a raffle item at meetings.

The meeting ended on a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by  
Angela Rester, club secretary

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

I have not gotten anymore articles from members about installing Windows 7 on their computer. After asking at the last meeting how many members were using Win7 it was Betty and me and possibly one other member, so I guess I will tell you my story. Betty took 2 pages, I'll try to do it in 2 paragraphs.

I have a fairly new computer running with a AMD Athlon 64X2 Dual Core Processor 4400 + 2.3 Gz with 4 Gb of ram. So I knew the hardware was capable to running Win7. My motherboard had gone bad recently and Neal had put a new one in and Art had reloaded my Vista to open with screen that lets me choose what operating system to boot. I had bought a new 1Tb SATA internal hard drive. I had to buy a new power cable to run the SATA drive. I plugged the SATA cable into the motherboard and plugged the new power cable into power supply and hard drive. The computer found the hard drive and then I formatted it and it named it J Drive.

Then disregarding all the backups and other things it recommended to do, I put the Win7 DVD into the DVD drive and it asked where I wanted to load it. I designated the empty J Drive and 64 bit as a Custom new install. About half hour later it had installed and then it found my printers and loaded the drivers for them. A LaserJet HP1012 that would not work in Vista was printing great in Win7. Set up my internet connections and started reloading my programs. Days (actually weeks) reloading programs and rearranging my data files and everything works great. If there is something missing, I just restart the computer in my old Vista operating system and take it off either my external hard drive or a flash drive and then restart the computer and boot into Win7. Life is good.

**I have not gotten any questions for next year's Santa Joe's presentation, so don't complain if I throw in a couple hard questions.**

Joe Fornero - Editor

At our last board meeting it was discussed that many times we go into too much depth on explaining items and thus go way over the heads of most of members. So it was decided to spend a majority of this year reaching out to new members and old members that are still at the beginner computer level. The majority of programs this year will be directed toward the beginner. Terry will be doing a program on Windows explorer (file management) and also a brief history of calculators in February. Others in the works will include backing up your computer hard drive, basic utility tools, beginning Word and Excel. Some may take up the entire program time, some may include a couple different ones. We are also looking for your input on programs that you think would best serve our members. We will still try to include some programs by businesses that are involved with computers, possibly another **program by Smart Computing and John Miller's** choice about the Internet.

**SMART COMPUTING  
SUBSCRIPTION**

Smart Computing has given the club some 1 year subscriptions to their magazine. This month one of them will be available to the highest bidder in a sealed bid auction. If you are interested you can send your bid to Betty at [bbeatty@grics.net](mailto:bbeatty@grics.net) or we will be taking bids at the February meeting. The regular price for a one year subscription is \$29. The bidding will close just before the beginning of the raffle. Good Luck!!

# TALES FROM THE TRENCHES: SKIP THE TRAPEZE

BY GREGORY ANDERSON

We all have to view PDFs (Portable Document Format) from time to time, and along with everyone else, I use Adobe Acrobat Reader to open and read the documents that come across my email and browser. Reader **works well enough that I'm willing** to deal with its constant background presence and endless **updates. I'm not here to knock** Reader into the net unless, of course, you have suggestions for free and seamless replacements. **Then I'm all ears.** Every once in awhile, though, most of us encounter a need to make our own PDFs. The format is incredibly helpful when you want to control the formatting of a document, such as a résumé or a **newsletter. It's also useful in** preventing casual editing of **important documentation. It's** much harder to edit a PDF (by accident or by design) than to change a Word document. PDFs also generally offer better compression than other formats for documents with lots of graphics, **especially when you're dealing** with images embedded in word-processing docs or spreadsheets. Finally, PDFs offer near-universal compatibility. Almost everyone **has Acrobat Reader, so you won't** have to worry about whether a client has the right version of PowerPoint to see your presentation.

When the need strikes, most people either shell out a few hundred bucks for Adobe Acrobat, hunt down a friend with a copy installed, or just give up on the

**idea. One alternative I've used** in the past is a scanner. Most software bundled with scanners offers the option to save scanned material in PDF format. So, if you have a party invite or budget report that you want to preserve or protect, you can print a hard copy and pass it through your scanner into PDF format. Make sure to print and scan at high resolutions to limit degradation of **quality. It's not the most** elegant of solutions, but for a long time, it was about the only use I got out of my scanner.

A couple years ago, I discovered an even better solution: freeware. One nice **thing about PDF is that it's an** open format; other applications (besides Acrobat) can create PDF files, as well. Some, like the Acrobat application itself, offer premium features such as collaborative document reviewing and page bookmarking for a price (anywhere from \$100 to \$300). However, there are several upstarts happy to provide free basic functionality to those of us who only need to create simple PDFs every once in awhile.

My personal standby is PrimoPDF (free; [www.primopdf.com](http://www.primopdf.com)). The program is free for personal use, it provides a variety of output options (including screen,

print, or high resolution), and it installs as if it were a printer. One nice thing about **the "virtual printer" model is** that the software only runs **when you need it. It's as** easy to use as a printer, too. Just select PrimoPDF instead of your normal printer. The program loads, you pick a destination path for the file, and anything you print will come out as a PDF.

**I'm sure there are other options** out there, and perhaps even some better ones. What have you found?

*Gregory Anderson is a regular contributor to Smart Computing and several other technology publications. He keeps a sharp eye (with the help of thick glasses) on computing trends and enjoys working with geeks of all stripes—most of time. Share your tales of formatting frustration with Greg at [gregory-anderson@smartcomputing.com](mailto:gregory-anderson@smartcomputing.com)*

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# MR. MODEMS' S DESKTOP

## CRUISING DOWN MEMORY LANE

In my October column, I referenced a recent garage-cleaning project—performed under marital duress, I might add—during which I entered a technological time warp. Rediscovering a treasure trove of old gadgets and gizmos, including my first training **modem, the adorable “L’il Geekster” model, triggered a wave of nostalgia.**

Despite the swirling clouds of noxious dust and minty-fresh asbestos, I rekindled my relationship with old reel-to-reel tapes; a box of 8-tracks; a brick-like, bolt-between-the-seats car phone; a stack of 5.25-inch diskettes from an era when floppy meant floppy; a Zenith CPU; several brittle rolls of thermal paper for a primordial fax machine; and an assortment of cables, adapters, and tools for items that have faded into history and the local landfill.

In that column, I wistfully reflected on a number of other items from that era that are also gone forever, such as pay phones, telephone booths, transistor radios, drive-in movies, manual typewriters, phonograph records, and uniformed attendants at full-service gas stations. I concluded with an invitation to email me your warm-and-fuzzy memories of other technologies and services that have similarly vanished from the landscape. To paraphrase Bob Hope, thanks for your memories.

**“Decades before iPods, iTunes, and downloading songs, we played LPs on the hi-fi or got three plays for a quarter on the juke box at the diner. Remember those little plastic insert adapters for 45rpm records?”**

**“I grew up during a period when all phones were party lines that you cranked to ring up the operator. ‘Hi, Betty. Could you ring 4-7, please?’ Betty would say, ‘Hold on a minute. I just saw him walk by.’ There would be a pause, a muffled yell, then ‘I got him! I’ll connect you now.’”**

**“Long before email, I remember a time when our mail carrier would let himself in our house and leave the mail on the table. We never gave it a second thought.”**

**“Before we all became fat, I remember having to actually get up off the couch to change the channel on the TV.”**

**“It wasn’t very high-tech, but I loved the Pez dispenser. I had a collection of them. I don’t even want to think about what was in those Pez pellets. I must have eaten a million of them.”**

**“Almanacs and encyclopedias. They used to be a great reference for just about anything—long before Google.”**

**“I miss Mr. Wizard. He was a nerdy guy who did little science experiments on TV. I’m sure if**

there were computers back then, he would have had a computer show. He might have even been Mr. **Modem!”**

**“Nobody had a house key because we never locked any doors. The only key I carried was my roller skate key.”**

**“I drove a Nash Metropolitan convertible. I paid \$1,200 for it new, but I didn’t spring for the optional radio or heater. Big mistake here in North Dakota. It got 40mpg and gas cost 24 cents a gallon. Do the math.”**

**“I remember TV test patterns that came on when broadcast programming stopped for the day. We only had one station, but it would start and end the day with ‘The Star-Spangled Banner.’”**

**“Since our local newspaper went under, I miss the morning paper and reading it with my coffee. Getting the news from the Web is OK, but there’s nothing like reading a newspaper. Maybe I need to try the Kindle.”**

**“I miss 8mm home movies. After the film was processed, families would gather and watch them on a small screen. Today, everything is instantly viewable on camcorder or you visit someone’s Facebook page.”**

Big deal.”

“It wasn’t quite online banking, but I remember blank checks located on store counters. You selected your bank, wrote your name, address, and account number, if you had it, and paid for your merchandise. Identity theft? Nobody even thought of such a thing.”

Thanks to all of you who emailed your recollections.

While there wasn’t nearly enough room to publish all of them, if what appears above served as a catalyst for any

additional recollections, please share them with me and we’ll do this again next year.

From Mrs. Modem, myself, Willy, Nilly, Bertie, and Lilly, we wish you a happy holiday ahead. For my last computing tip of the year, I’m going to go out on a limb here, but I predict that Y2K10 is not going to be a problem—even for Vista users. **Have a great New Year, and I’ll meet you back here in January.**

**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](http://www.MrModem.com)*

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## SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS

**5GHz Frequency:** Most wireless networks use the 2.4GHz frequency, which other gadgets also use. Too many competing devices can cause signal interference in the form of slowdowns and dropouts. If your router supports it, use the 5GHz frequency instead - it’s less crowded.

**Choose 802.11n:** Wi-Fi, whose technical label is 802.11, uses four possible standards: a, b, g, and n. The latest standard is 802.11n, which provides the best combination of transmission speed, range, security, and flexibility. If you have a choice, go with 802.11n.

**Stop Pop-ups:** If you’ve ever tried to close persistent pop-up ads, you know it can be a futile effort. Instead of clicking the red X located in the upper-right corner of most windows, press ALT and F4 on your keyboard to close a selected pop-up ad. Alternatively, you can use the Windows

Task Manager to close pop-up ads, but be careful not to close critical Windows processes or legitimate applications that are currently in use. If you’re receiving constant pop-up ads, you may have a security breach. Run anti-malware software if you think your PC may be infected.

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**Introduction**

This is part one of a two part article on this topic. Now, before anyone feels that I'm out of line for referring to someone as a dummy, I want to make it clear that I was the networking dummy in question, for many years.

While I build and repair my own computers, and have written considerable software, I was always very weak on networking. However, lately I've graduated from dummy school, thanks to some good hardware and software, and more experiences with my home network.

I thought I'd share my old, and new experiences, with you, as they have come from many years of frustrating activities, associated with my home wireless network.

This article will not go into the complete aspect of all types of networks, but is limited to home networks, which are what many of you already have, or are possibly contemplating having in the near future.

**HOME NETWORK PURPOSES**

Allowing multiple computers to share the internet, is the usual purpose of a home network. My Internet Service Provider (ISP) is Comcast.

Most homes use either the local cable company, which is Comcast here in Boca Raton, or a DSL (digital subscriber line) from the landline phone company (AT&T here in Boca).

A secondary purpose can be accessing stored files on other computers on the network, or sharing devices such as printers installed on other computers.

**WIRELESS ROUTERS**

Most home networks use a wireless router. This is a unit which allows multiple devices (usually

computers) to be plugged into it, and also provides a wireless signal which broadcasts in all directions, so that computers which have a wireless adapter (either via an internal card, or a USB plug-in wire-less adapter) can connect to the Internet.

**My Networking Task & Troubles Back In 2002**

First, here's a commentary of what occurred, some years back, in my first brush with home networking. I decided that I wanted a wireless network, as I had two computers, and I wanted both to have access to the Internet .

Since it would have been very inconvenient to run an ethernet cable from my main computer's router to the second computer, I opted for a router with wireless capability.

**MAIN COMPUTER SET UP**

I purchased a Linksys wireless router, since Linksys was one of the biggest names in this product area, then I installed the router, and connected my main computer via an ethernet cable, which uses RJ-45 connectors. These connectors look like the connectors on telephones, but they are larger. I connected my Adelphia computer modem to my new router, and just assumed that all would work right away. Of course, nothing worked to start off.

There was no installation CD disc, but there were many pages of manual instructions on what one had to do to set things up. The complexity of the instructions was mind boggling, so I called Linksys support - which was in the Philippines.

Tech support worked by rote. They followed various sets of instructions, and most of the sup-

port staff really was not that capable. I also called Adelphia tech support, finding someone "network knowledgeable" there was also quite difficult.

After several days of back and forth calls, and speaking to quite a number of different persons, I finally got my main computer (which was hard wired to the router) online and working properly with my Internet connection.

**SECOND COMPUTER SET UP**

Next came getting my #2 computer connected to the router, via the wireless capability. I had bought a Linksys USB wireless adapter. It also had nothing much in the way of information on how to use it, and no install CD.

I connected the wireless adapter to machine #2, and guess what - nothing happened. So, it was back onto Linksys tech support. I must have spent eight to ten hours fumbling around, while talking to Linksys support. We tried everything, but we could not get the second computer to connect to the Internet.

Finally, the Linksys tech support person advised me that he could only suggest one final step. There was a free program available on the Internet, called "Boingo" - some name! He gave me the URL to that page, which was not a Linksys page. He suggested that I download and install it, and it would get my wireless adapter connected up, so I did, and amazingly 5 minutes later, I realized success. So why couldn't Linksys have some similar software included with the wireless adapter?

**TASK NOT QUITE FINISHED YET**

I noted that when my #2 computer finally made it on line, that the received wireless signal was quite weak. Out of a possible 5 bars of signal strength, it hopped back and forth between one and none, so I did some investigating, and learned that the large distance between my wireless router, and the #2 computer was right at the max usable distance. Checking around, I found, on the Linksys site, a “booster amp”, that was designed to work with my router. There were even four recessed holes on the top of my router, to hold the four feet of the booster amp.

So I bought this amp, and finally the install went smoothly. Since it was nothing but an amplifier, there were no settings or adjustments. It did improve the signal strength slightly, and I now had a solid one bar reading. This was good enough to maintain Internet connectivity, but did give me a very slow connection. So after about 10 days of stumbling around, I finally got my system working.

This picture is what the router and booster look like. The picture is actually the new router, with the old booster on top of it. The new and old routers are virtually identical in size.



### Moving Ahead In Time

In mid April 2009, I suddenly started having problems with my main computer's Internet

access, and then my wireless computer's access.

After reviewing the symptoms, and running a few checks, I became convinced that my Linksys router had developed a problem. Because of its age (7 years), and the fact that it was an older 802.11b model, I decided that the simplest approach was just to get a new router. And, if I stayed with the Linksys WRT54GL, which was an 802.11G unit, I could have the faster speed of the G series. And, the new router would accommodate my old booster, since it had the same mating holes to mount the booster.

### EXTENDED NETWORK

By this point in time, I had my main desktop computer hard wired to the router, and two other desktops and a laptop wirelessly connected to the router. And yes, as I added computers 3 and 4 some years back, all things did not go smoothly. My laptop was the easiest. When I got it in 2004, it already had a wireless adapter built in. When I turned it on, it immediately found the wireless network, and was connected.

The #3 desktop also had a built in wireless card, but getting it online was a struggle, similar to the first wireless connection. Finally, I did get it working, without having to resort to BOINGO.

### Coming in Part 2

In part 2 of “Networking for Dummies”, I'll relate my experiences in installing the new Linksys router, and then getting all four machines running smoothly there. I was dreading going through what I'd been through in the past. This was a night and day difference from my first experiences in 2002. The router came with an installation CD. And it installed the router and my main computer, “as smooth as silk”.

When I started on the installs of the three wireless computers, there were a few hiccups. But I then went on line, to check out a program called “Network Magic”. It was touted as being the way to go when installing and configuring networks. They offered a free 7 day trial, which allows the user to install the software on up to eight computers, and let Network Magic do all the work for you.

Since Network Magic was created by Cisco, and Cisco now owns Linksys, if you were using a Linksys router, most of the important software features would continue working forever, at no cost to the user.

If you did not have a Linksys router, you could buy the lesser standard (up to 3 computers), or the Pro version (up to 8 computers), for \$29.99 and \$39.99 respectively.

### Conclusion

This is the end of part 1 of “Networking for Dummies”. Next month, the second part of this will cover installing my new router, and getting all 4 computers online, and talking to each other. This was indeed a real eye-opener for me. I was most happy to see that the setup and configuration had gone from a terrifying experience to a “walk-in-the-park”.

**Written by Ron Hirsch, Member & Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida**

[www.brccs.org](http://www.brccs.org)

Hirsch, Ron . "Ron Hirsch Special Series." "Networking for Dummies (part 1 of 2)" *Boca Raton Computer Society*. Retrieved on Web. 26 Jan. 2010. From <[www.brccs.org/PDF/networking\\_for\\_dummies\\_part1.pdf](http://www.brccs.org/PDF/networking_for_dummies_part1.pdf)>

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Sauk Computer User Group  
PRICE LIST FOR COPYING TO MP3s

**CASSETTE TAPE – VINYL RECORDS (78, 45, 33 1/3)  
CONVERT TO MP3s**

Type	Sides	Club Member Cost	Non-Member Cost
33 1/3	Both	\$3.00	\$4.00
78	Both	\$2.00	\$3.00
45	Both	\$2.00	\$3.00
Cassette	Both	\$3.00	\$4.00
CDs		\$3.00	\$4.00

**Please bring an empty flash drive for recording your records and cassettes else we will charge an additional \$1 to put on a CD which includes case.**

**If you wish tracks on records and cassettes separated as individual files, there will be an additional charge of 50¢ per track. The mp3 files can be put on a CD with a case for an additional charge of \$1.00. If you wish to separate albums and cassettes to individual CDs, we must charge \$1.00 each.**

# FIXING BLACK MENU BARS IN IE8

By Terry MacLennan

If you are using the latest browser by Microsoft (IE8), there is a possibility you may see your menu bars turn black as mine did. In addition, the buttons that should have been there show up as being either too small or not even there as the button size had also changed. Microsoft has not addressed the issue yet but after doing a bit of hunting on the web, I found an easy solution.

Even though your general Windows color scheme appearance may already be technically set, it needs to be reapplied to fix **the** problem as it shows up in IE8. For whatever reason, you essentially have to set it twice to get a permanent fix.

- Right click on the desktop
- Select properties
- Select appearance tab
- Put in a new color scheme and ACCEPT
- Put back the original color scheme (if you wish to keep as it was before) and click ACCEPT again

Although this may sound like a strange way to fix a problem in the browser, it does work.

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## UPDATE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Operating System: \_\_\_\_\_

If you didn't turn in this form last month please turn in at this **month's meeting. We would like to** update your personal information so we can be sure you get the newsletter and any meeting information that may change at last minute. No information is shared with anyone outside the club. Thanks for your cooperation. Please turn in with your dues: \$20 for single and \$26 for family living under one roof. **If you have not paid your dues, this will be the last newsletter you receive until we they are paid.**

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

**Feb 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**

FEBRUARY'S MEETING THEME: HOW-TO AND BASIC USES OF  
WINDOWS EXPLORER (FILE EXPLORER) BY TERRY MACLENNAN