The Computer Link

June 2010

NNCUG Officers

President
Chris Christensen
804-438-4339

Vice President
Phil Allan
804-776-6699

Secretary
Anne Moss
804-438-5280

Treasurer
George Cadmus
804-435-6328

Member-at-Large
B. J. McMillan
804-580-8666

The Computer Link
Bruce Mc Millan, Editor
804-580-8666

Website
Betty Lehman
<www.nncug.org>
Webteam
admin@nncug.org

E-mail address for all
NNCUG officers/staff:
admin@nncug.org

Send newsletter
submissions to Editor
➔DEADLINE⬅
for NEXT ISSUE,
One week after meeting

The Windows 7 Adventure

Our May 15 speaker was NNCUG President **Chris Christensen** who gave us a tour of Windows 7 features that he is enjoying. Chris is a recent newcomer to Win 7. Judging by the few hands shown in the audience of those who use Win 7, he is among the early adaptors for this operating system.

Chris did an upgrade installation to Win 7 Home Premium from Windows Vista on his computer. He noted that it took him about five hours for the entire process. In describing his experience, Chris noted that he could have created a dual boot set up that would have allowed him to use Win 7 and another operating system. He indicated that one could upgrade to Win 7 if the machine currently had Windows Vista installed, but that it was not possible to upgrade a computer with Windows XP. However, using the dual boot process, one could install Win 7 and retain Win XP on the computer. If one has a Win XP machine and wishes only to install Win 7, a complete fresh install would be needed (after saving all data that was to be retained).

There were several features that Chris demonstrated. Among these were the ability to set the desktop background to run a slide show that changed display images from a few seconds to 30 minutes, and using the gadget feature which contains all manner of enhanced graphics and display possibilities.

In particular, Chris showed the clock and weather gadgets. The clock has eight different face styles. To locate local weather, the user enters the desired postal ZIP code. Multi day and detailed forecasts can be obtained. Chris showed that both gadgets could be permanently displayed on the desktop.

Chris Christensen
Photo by Alan Christensen

As Chris finished his demonstration, a general discussion developed on Win 7 issues. Among the information shared was how one could determine the capacity of an existing computer to run Windows 7. Microsoft's web site has a section where one can actually run a test that will indicate if it is possible. The question was raised of whether or not software specifically developed to run under Win XP could also run under Win 7. A knowledgeable member of the audience indicated that the Win 7 Professional version has built in XP program capability to run XP specific software, whereas Win 7 Home Premium may not.

Thanks Chris for sharing your experience with Win 7!

Ed. *and Anne Moss*

Windows 7 Tech Tips

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.,

Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida
www.spcug.org
bwsail at yahoo.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Have you ever wanted or needed information about the hardware in your computer? Did you know that Windows 7 contains a command that can provide you with a list of your hardware components including memory information? It does and it is very easy to explore and to save to a file. There are other helpful little bits of information hidden in the recesses of Win7, so let's take some time to explore a few of them.

First let's check out the system information command. Go to Start and type "cmd" in the Search box (without the quotes), then press Enter. This will open a command window in which you can type "systeminfo", also without the quote marks. Press Enter again and you will get a detailed profile of your computer. This list will include the processor, BIOS version, operating system and updates, both installed and available memory and much more. In all, there are thirty-two categories of information provided by this command. You can scroll up and down through this information. Then, if you want to save this info to a disc file, type the command "systeminfo /FO CSV > systeminfo.csv". Again, without the quotes. This file will be saved in the directory shown at the beginning of the command line. So be sure you

remember this location when you go to look for the file. A CSV file can be opened in a spreadsheet or a database program. Now you will have a ready reference for the components which make up your computer. It's not a bad idea to create this file and keep it for reference purposes.

Of course, if you are a frequent reader of Dr Herb's "Computer Buffet" you would have seen references to "Belarc Advisor". This free program gives you a profile of all the hardware and software on your machine. It also highlights problem areas such as non-working applications. The software information can be quite extensive. The last time I ran this application on a Windows machine I had more than eight pages of information. Far more than I really wanted. The systeminfo command gives you a summary which is printable in one page.

There is another use for system information. If you type this "system information" command into the Start-Search box, it will bring up a list of applications before you finish typing. Select "System Information" from the list and click on it. You now have a double pane window with a tree of topics on the left and an information window on the right. The first item is a general summary of system information similar to the information we obtained in the command window. But there are other more detailed topics under the headings in the tree list. For example, hardware resources, components and software environment. Under components you will find a very important topic – problem devices. Hopefully, at this point there will be nothing listed when you highlight this topic. But if there are, it can lead you to solutions for some of your hardware problems. Under software environment you

will find a topic called Start-ups. This lists the applications that are loaded into memory when your computer starts. Always something worth knowing.

Another interesting item under Software Environment is Windows Error Reporting. This gives you a detailed list of applications that have "misfired" or produced system hang-ups. This can be useful when you have problems with either Windows or third-party applications. All of the errors I found on my system were related to missing drivers that I had to install after installing Win7. Once that was completed the errors disappeared. Yes, I said that with crossed fingers – no use asking for bad luck, right?

If you haven't backed up your computer recently, then you should try the backup built into Win7. In previous versions of Windows the backup application provided by Microsoft was very slow and some versions were very limited in the media to which they would write the backup file. It was also useless when you changed your Windows version as the file formats in the backup file were not compatible with the newer version. In the Win7 help files there is information on how to restore a backup made with Vista to Win7. So at least the latest versions should be compatible.

These latest versions of the backup applications are much faster than previous versions. To try the backup applications, open the Control Panel and select System Security, then backup and restore. Here you have several options. You can do a complete image of your hard drive, just backup your data, or make a system repair disc. If you did not get a Windows installation disc when you

Windows 7 Tech Tips
From Page 2

purchased your computer, then the first thing you should do is make a system repair disc. All you need for this is a blank CD and then just follow the on-screen instructions. The next step would be to make a complete image file, preferably on an external drive. It's really not a good idea to put it on the same drive you are imaging even if it is a separate partition. Why? Because when the drive fails you won't be able to access the image file to restore anything to a new hard drive. Even if you do have a Windows installation disc the repair disc plus the image file are a better solution for restoring Windows and your files after a drive failure. The image file you create will be more current than the original installation disc when it comes to Windows updates. It will also include the installation of all the applications you added after you purchased the system or upgraded to Win7.

Once you have the repair disc and the image backup you can start doing data backups, or you can create new image files periodically. There is no need to make image files unless you have added applications or made substantial changes to your system. Windows file backup can be set to run automatically to save your data files. It will also add new folders and files to the backup list when you create them. I would also recommend that this be saved to an external drive.

Do you have a need for a system to remember user names and passwords? Win7 has a credential manager which can be used for storing user names and passwords in an encrypted file. This application can be found in the Control Panel under User Accounts. If you can't find it, try searching within the Control Panel.

I frequently have a need to write down short notes or references to information I found on the Internet or in other sources. This is where Sticky Notes comes in quite handy. You can run this application by typing "stikynot" in the Start – Search box and clicking on the program that shows in the popdown menu. Alternatively, you can go to All Programs – Accessories and click on Sticky Notes. These can be placed anywhere on your desktop. You can also pin the application to the taskbar so it will be readily available. Just right click on the menu item or one of the sticky notes and select "pin to taskbar".

If you want to see the minute by minute performance of your computer, try typing "resource monitor" in the Start - Search box. The complete term will show up before you have completed typing and you can then click on the item. This brings up a window in which you can view the memory utilization, cpu utilization and other resources as you use your computer. It's a great way to see which applications are using the most memory.

By playing around with the Control Panel and other aspects of Windows 7, you can find many helpful built-in functions. You can also query the Help files. On my system the Help response is much quicker than it was in Vista and XP. I also found that many subjects are better explained and more detailed. So if you are stuck on something, try the Help application that's on the Start menu. The more you play with Win7, the more you will find that may be useful.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.

Northern Neck Computer Education June Meeting

Mr. **Justin Hart**, a representative from the Northern Neck Technical Center (NNTC), will speak at the **June 19th NNCUG Meeting**. He will be discussing the mission and the computer courses offered to local students.

The mission of the NNTC is to provide a comprehensive technical education to Northern Neck area students. Several of the NNTC students did well in the SkillsUSA competition for computer maintenance.

Mr. Hart, a Microsoft Certified Professional, has 12 years of experience in the computer field and education.

Chris Christensen

Recognition for PhotoSIG Photographers

Recently, several PhotoSIG members received recognition for their outstanding photographs! Please congratulate **Linda Boyatzies, Carol Hammer, Marilyn Jurkops, Marianne Miller, and Loreta Stover**. PhotoSIG members join together to share their ideas, skills, and photographs on the first Tuesday of each month. All are welcome! ***Ed.***

Left.   **Linda Boyatzies**
Osprey with Catch
Honorable Mention
RAL Photography Show - 2010

Right.   **Linda Boyatzies**
Distorted Butterfly
Second Place
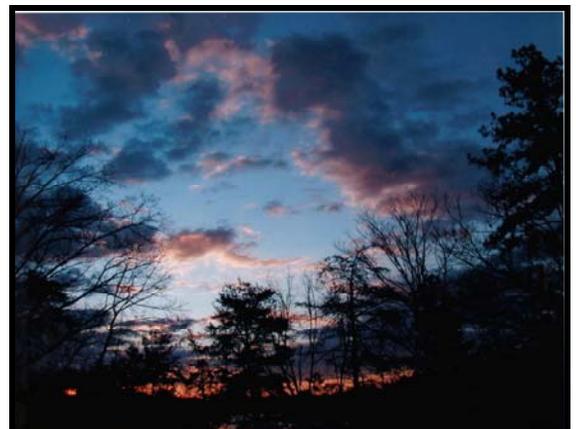APCUG 2010 Photo Contest
Enhanced Category

Above.   **Marilyn Jurkops**
My Cyn on Pittman's Cove
Third Place - RAL Photography Show - 2010

Above Left.   **Carol Hammer**
Snowy Egret
Honorable Mention - RAL Small Works Show - 2010

Left. **Marianne Miller**
Afternoon Sun
Honorable Mention
RAL Photography Show
2010

Right. **Loreta Stover**
Dawn Over Hills Creek
Honorable Mention
RAL Photography Show
2010

GenealogySIG News

On May 14th, the Genealogy Special Interest Group was treated to a presentation by **Mary Elizabeth Stewart** on *The Master Genealogist (TMG)* by Wholly Genes. Mary recognized its potential early on and migrated to the software to overcome some of the limitations found in other programs. Her years of experience using the software contributed greatly to her presentation with her many insights.

> **Please note that future GenealogySIG meetings will be held on the second Thursday in odd numbered months. The time remains the same, 1:00 pm, at the R-WC Game Room.**

The greatest strength of TMG is its flexibility. It has both beginner and advanced data entry modes and data entry can be customized through user-defined event, name, and relationship types. Almost every aspect of the working environment can also be customized, including fonts, colors, and the size and position of windows.

Another strength of TMG is the dozens of preconfigured reports, including narratives, forms, charts, and lists. Existing reports can be customized and new ones can be created as needed.

Of utmost importance in genealogy is the thoroughness and accuracy of citations. When it comes to tracking sources, TMG really shines! Data-entry templates make it easy to record sources and produce professional output. The Master Genealogist accommodates the highest academic standards.

Excellent user support is found on the Wholly Genes website, a user-run mailing list, and several sites that have hints, tips and other help.

A 30 day free trial of TMG can be downloaded from www.whollygenes.com or by using a trial CD. A few Master Genealogist CDs will be available at the July 8 meeting.

Ann Thompson

Membership Report - **May 2010**

Welcome - None

RENEW *June 2010 – Carolyn Bridgers, Alan Christensen, Chris Christensen, Rick Crawford, Richard Davis, David Herndon, Brian Riley, Ann Thompson, Steve Zukor*

RENEW *May 2010 – Susan Barrick, Russell Buxton, Tom Duke, Jean Ehlman, Robert Headley, Tom Miller, Elaine Parrish, Tony Rabalais*

Membership dues are $20 annually. Please send to:
George Cadmus, Treasurer, NNCUG, 150 Pine Drive,
White Stone VA 22578

For insertion into our local newspaper advertising, please send to bevnjim@netscape.com no later than 15th of the month.

May 15 Meeting Notes

MEMBERS ATTENDING: 20.

TREASURER'S REPORT: 104 members.

SIG REPORTS:

PHOTO: NONE.

GENEALOGY: **Ann Thompson** gave a report on her attendance at the National Genealogy Society Conference in Salt Lake City. At the next Genealogical SIG meeting on Thursday July 8, Ann will present information about the latest technology shown at the Conference. Included will be new resources added to online databases, family history software and cloud computing, archival preservation, electronic grave markers, deluxe charts and much more. The last Genealogy SIG meeting featured **Mary Elizabeth Stewart** who spoke on The Master Genealogist software. Ann encourages any person with either beginner interest or who is more advanced in doing research into family origins to attend the group.

Q AND A TIME: There were several questions about Windows 7, compatibility with old software one might have, when an upgrade is possible, and any new and useful features. A knowledgeable group member advised us that Windows 7 Professional has XP program compatibility for running XP based software, but that The Home Premium version does not.

SPEAKER/PRESENTER: Our guest speaker was unable to attend. President **Chris Christensen** presented his experience with installation of Windows 7 and the features that he is enjoying.

RAFFLE WINNERS: No raffle this month.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Anne Moss, Secretary

The Computer Link

**Northern Neck
Computer
Users' Group
150 Pine Drive
White Stone, VA 22578**

NNCUG Meeting Dates

NNCUG GENERAL MEETING
Third Saturday 10:00 a.m.
Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room

BEGINNERS SIG
Meets three times a year. Those interested, contact
B.J. McMillan at 580-8666

GENEALOGY SIG
Meets bi-monthly, 2nd Thursday, 1:00 p.m.—RW-C
Contact Ann Thompson at athompson@kaballero.com
to get on the mail list for announcements.

PHOTOSHOP SIG
First Tuesday every month, 9:30 a.m.
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831
or message Bird@kaballero.com

**For a photo treat visit
www.rapptapp.homestead.com**
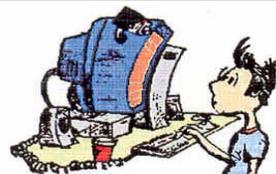
Computer Help available by appointment. Call Betty Lehman 435-2011 or B.J. McMillan 580-8666

Coming Attractions

Membership—June 19th, 10:00am-Justin Hart
Genealogy—July 8, 1:00 pm—Ann Thompson
Photo SIG—June 1st, 9:30 am—Kilmarnock Library