The Computer Link

July 2009

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

Marilou McCrosky Builds a Website

School teacher and website builder Marilou McCrosky demonstrated how easy it is to build your own website to the membership at the June meeting. She used Tripod for creating and hosting hers and took us through the process.

She kept it as simple as possible starting with what you want to say and how you want to say it. Then select a host and follow the templates. A visit to the **Tripod website** reveals how easy it is to experiment or intuitively create a site of your own. You use Tripod templates, create navigation bars, links to other sites, links to continuing pages, learn how to insert pictures (use jpeg or Gif) and files (from Word or Power-Point) and choose many other options. There is a way to scan in printed articles. All of this is free until you exceed the 20 mb limit and apply (and wait 48-72 hours) for a domain name.

Yahoo and Google have similar

Marilou McCrosky
Photo by Chris Christensen

programs to Tripod, but Marilou picked Tripod because she has experience with it from her school teaching classes. It was really great to seeing how today's school children are learning the benefits of the computer age.

For a real temptation to do your own website, go to **www.mariloubray.com** and visit her virtual tour of Northumberland County. Also read her email to me below. **Ed**.

Tom—Thanks! Glad you enjoyed it. had a great time presenting to your group. I like making pages and it can be as easy or difficult as the developer wishes. I decided to show people how to use Tripod as a tool to develop their own web site for two reasons. First I believe it is easier to learn if specific instructions are given. Secondly, all of the tools and functions that I covered during the presentation are also included in any online web hosting service so my instructions also apply to other hosting services but the tools and functions may look different. I have used this hosting service for many years so I am able to provide help if anyone needs it. Writing a web

Twitter – What You Are Doing Right Now

Written by *Ira Wilsker,*
APCUG Director; Columnist,
The Examiner, Beaumont,
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WEBSITES:
http://www.twitter.com

Several of the readers of this column asked me, "What is Twitter?" following the media reports that senators and congress people were "Twittering" during recent presidential speeches. Twitter (the internet service and the person who does the posting) and Twittering or Tweeting (the posting of personal activities on Twitter) has become one of the most popular ways of communicating one's activities so that others can follow **what is going on in the life of a Twitter**. The service is self-described as, "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co–workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" According to some of the national media quoted by Twitter.com, "The New York Times calls Twitter "one of the fastest-growing phenomena on the Internet." TIME Magazine says, "Twitter is on its way to becoming the next killer app," and Newsweek noted that "Suddenly, it seems as though **all the**

world's a-twitter." One may wonder why a Twitter user would post his daily activities as they occur; Twitter explains it this way, "Why? Because even basic updates are meaningful to family members, friends, or colleagues—especially when they're timely."

Just to experience the life of a Twitter, I went to www.twitter.com and signed up for a free account. The signup process was very fast and easy, only asking for me to create my user name, create a secure password, and entering my email address. After creating my account, I was given the opportunity to

> **I went to www.twitter.com and signed up for a free account**

upload a photo of myself for display to anyone that views my Twitter page, and allow me to customize my page to control the way others view it. I entered my first short message that I was using Twitter, and it appeared on my now personalized webpage. Since messages and other postings are intended to appear as text messages on cell phones as well as on a webpage, **individual postings are limited to 140 characters,** the maximum length of a text message (SMS) allowed on most cell phone systems. As I was typing this column, I posted a Twitter (message) that I was typing this column; if

anyone is following my activities at this instant, he would receive this news as a text message on his cell phone, as an RSS feed on his computer, and email, or by simply viewing my Twitter webpage. On my view of my webpage is a text box where I can type my current activity, as long as I keep it under 140 characters, as shown by the counter adjacent to the text box. Postings can be made or received **by computer, cell phone text message, Blackberry,** or other communications device. Postings can also be received on any newsreader that uses the RSS format news feed.

Twitter makes it very easy to find friends who also Twitter. By clicking on the "Find People" icon, a window is opened that says "Find people". Follow them". To locate friends on Twitter, I chose to allow Twitter to access my email address book to determine if any of my current correspondents are on Twitter. Twitter can access (but only with your express permission) address books on Yahoo, Gmail, AOL, Hotmail, and MSN. It will quickly scan the online address book, and match any email addresses in the address book against the millions already in the Twitter database. **Twitter states that it does not save the email addresses and passwords,** and does not send out emails to those

Q: How can I keep from losing gadgets like remote controls?

A review *by Gabe Goldberg,*
Computers and Publishing, Inc.
Tiplet (at) gabegold.com

Eyeglasses case, TV remote control, car keys, cat. Where is it? Things we have -- animate or inanimate -- sometimes take on a life of their own and do NOT cooperate by appearing when they're wanted.

We can't tie strings to them all, and blaming one's spouse for their disappearance is only briefly satisfying. So Loc8tor, a small gadget that finds what's missing, is handy to have around.

Loc8tor provides two kinds of small homing tag and two handheld locating devices which work like modern-day dowsing rods. The tags, attached to valuables, signal the devices from up to 600 feet away. The fancier device (pocket-sized Loc8tor Plus) has a **small radar screen** which displays lines pointing towards a missing tag; it can handle up to 24 tags. The lesser device (credit card-sized Loc8tor Lite, handles four tags) uses a row of lights and a beeping tone to signal when it's pointed towards the tag; more lights lit and faster beeps shows the device's excitement at pointing in the correct direction. Using either device, when you get close, the tag's blinking light and chirping brings you in for the finish.

> **blinking light and chirping brings you in for the finish**

The Mini-Homing Tag can be found by either Loc8tor; the Loc8tor Plus can **sound an alert** if a tag goes beyond a settable distance away – useful for keeping children or pets within a comfortable range. The Panic Homing Tag includes a button which sounds an alert on the Loc8tor Plus -- giving parent and child, or caregiver and patient, a simple and fast way to communicate an urgent message.

The tags are just a bit too large to mount on eyeglasses. That would require a rice-grain size item and the manufacturer simply can't – yet -- fit battery, antenna, radio, light, and beeper into something that small. And I've not yet convinced my wife that wearing a tag as an earring would be a pleasant fashion accessory, while letting me locate her in our house and yard.

But aside from those minor limitations, it's a great tool for avoiding tedious searches. True story: Such a device once found my keys in the pocket of a heavy winter coat I was wearing, saving me the trouble of wandering all over the house and THEN looking in my pockets. Depending on construction material, the **signal works through walls** and floors and can locate a car in a parking garage -- though likely only on the correct level. Testimonials describe use with pets, model airplanes, toys, and even for construction and running cables.

Loc8tor Plus Pack (locating device, three Mini-Homing Tags, one Panic Homing Tag) costs $170; Loc8tor Lite costs $80 (locating device, two Mini-Homing Tags).

Twitter *Continued from pg .2*

located without express permission to do so. I also used the "Find on Twitter" feature to enter my last name to see if any of my relatives are on Twitter, and add them to my friends list. Just as a lark, I entered the names of some of our elected officials, and found that several of them do have Twitter accounts. If I want to invite friends by personal email, I can enter their email addresses in the **"Invite by Email" box**, and Twitter will send them an invitation.

If I want to add celebrities to my friend's list, I can click on "Suggested Uses**", and a list of celebrities who Twitter will be displayed.** By checking the box adjacent to their names, we can exchange Twitter posts and monitor each others' activities. Some of the more interesting celebrities and online services that can be added to anyone's Twitter friends list are the Jodrell Bank observatory, the Dell Outlet Store, JetBlue Airways Customer Service (monitors

Twitter 24/7), the New York Times, 10 Downing Street (the official residence of the British Prime Minister), rapper M. C. Hammer, CNN Breaking News, Al Gore, John McCain, Whole Foods Market (Fresh organic tweets

June 2009 Photo SIG Winning Photo

Twirling Pink Hibiscus *by Gerry Holmes*

from Whole Foods Market HQ in Austin), Lance Armstrong, Britney Spears (Yes! This is the real Britney Spears!), George Stephanopoulos (ABC News Chief Washington Correspondent and Host of "This Week"), Women's Wear Daily, the Nightline TV news show, Martha Stewart, comedian and magician Penn Jillette, rapper 50 cent, and many more. The business and news outlets listed post

breaking news or special deals to their Twitter friends. One that I added, being the nascent bargain shopper, is Woot.com, which posts one deeply discounted bargain each day in each of its merchandise categories.

Twitter, the company, is headquartered in San Francisco, and was founded in 2006. It is a small company, with **only a few dozen employees**, but has millions of members. It has a marketing model to generate revenue, but the revenue model has not yet been implemented, leaving all of the posts and web pages currently free of advertising.

I am not sure how much I will be using Twitter on a regular basis by posting my personal activities and short commentaries, but I will check my page occasionally just to see who is following my activities. The main purpose of Twitter is to answer the question, "What are you doing?" For those who want others to be able to know the answer in real time, they can do so with Twitter.

Losing Gadgets *Continued from Page 3*

Ed has been happy to do the monthly *Computerlink* since taking over for Betty Lehman in January 2003. She was an excellent tutor. She set up a printing scheme with Kinkos (now FedEx Office) where I have the pleasure of driving to Newport News every month to have each edition printed to perfection by wonderful friendly professionals. My thanks to you all for making the *Link* a fun project. Ed.

Eighteen Attend Kickoff of Genealogy SIG

The NNCUG Genealogy Special Interest Group met for the first time in several years at the RW-C meeting room on July 9th with **Ann Thompson** giving a 56 slide presentation on organizing documents for research using your computer. Eighteen enthusiastic novice genealogists attended.

Ann started by revealing that if one were to go back just ten generations, there will need to be documentation for over 2000 ancestors. It is essential to keep accurate and organized records and detail the sources. Some might want to create scrapbooks, others publish family histories. "No matter what you create, **you will need a system,"** according to Ann.

There are color coding systems, binders, cabinets, forms, logs, charts, forms, indexes, note taking methods

and much, much more involved in successful research. Some software programs are very helpful keeping one on track and able to retrieve connected information. It goes on and on.

Ann went on to describe the features of two popular software programs, *Clooz* and *Bygones* and a very good book, 30 Seconds: A Guide to Organizing Your Genealogy Files. She suggested some **topics for future programs** at meetings to educate the members on the secrets of good genealogy projects.

The PowerPoint presentation is hoped to be posted on www.nncug.org soon. Take a look at it. You may wish to look up you family tree too. The next meeting is September 10th. Contact Ann at *athompson@kaballero.com.* **Ed.**.

June Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 am at the RW-C meeting hall on 6/20/09.

There were 38 members and visitors present. The minutes were approved and treasurer's report given.

BJ McMillan led a discussion of questions and answers from the attendees.

There was a discussion of a possible joint meeting with a local genealogy study group in the future.

The speaker was Marilou McCrosky. She discussed "Writing to the Web" and the use of tripod for web design. at www.tripod.com The raffle winners were **Carol Hallett, George Ciedmus, and Susan Barrack.**

We adjourned at 11:15 am.

Don Beard, Secretary

Membership Report - **July 2009**

NEW MEMBER– Brian Riley

RENEW July 2009 – Norm Farley, Cliff Freeman, John Hess, Jim Thompson, Jan Wilson

RENEW June 2009 – Alan Christensen, Rick Crawford, Richard Davis, David Herndon, Ann Thompson, Steve Zukor.

Membership dues are $20 annually. Please send to:

Jim Thompson, Treasurer, NNCUG, P.O. Box 774, Burgess, VA. 22432

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

Website *Continued from Pg. 1* site is not hard but it can be hard to get started. My hope is that members of your group will try to write a page and then realize that it is a great way to store and share information. Adding information to a web page, blog, wiki is what the next generation internet is all about. Creating web pages is a step toward this new interactive internet.
Thanks for allowing me to share with your group.
I am a high school teacher and I use the internet to create an online classroom presence, an online test bank and interactive lessons and worksheets. It has been said that I can't teach without electricity and I don't want to try! Thanks and keep in touch,

Marilou McCrosky

The Computer Link

**Northern Neck Computer
Users' Group
P.O. Box 1213
Kilmarnock, Va. 22482**

NNCUG Meeting Dates

NNCUG GENERAL MEETING
Third Saturday 9:30 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 Tuesday, 1:30 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 a.m.
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831
or message Bird@kaballero.com*
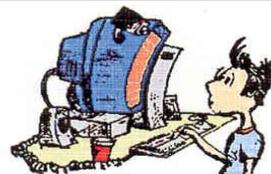
**For a photo treat visit
www.rapptapp.homestead.com**

Computer Help available by appointment. Call Betty Lehman 435-2011 or B.J. McMillan 580-8666

Coming Attractions

**Membership—July 18 9:30 am—RW-C—MS Publisher
Photo SIG—August 4th, 9 am—Library**