

# The

# Computer Link

January 2014

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

## NNCUG Officers

**President**  
**Rob Mink**  
804-436-5615

**Vice President**  
**Brian Riley**  
804-436-2252

**Secretary**  
**Anne Moss**  
804-438-5280

**Treasurer**  
**George Cadmus**  
804-435-6328

**Member-at-Large**  
**Jim Sapione**  
804-462-5831

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

**Website**  
**Webmaster**  
<Webmaster@  
nncug.net>

E-mail address for all  
NNCUG officers/staff:  
[geocadjr@verizon.net](mailto:geocadjr@verizon.net)

Send newsletter  
submissions to Editor

**→DEADLINE←**  
**for NEXT ISSUE,**  
**One week after meeting**

## Storage Media, Interfaces, and Backups

**Rob Mink**, President NNCUG, was the speaker at the December NNCUG Meeting. Rob's discussion about storage media and interfaces was designed to pick up from Brian Riley's October discussion about the use of external hard drives for computer backup. (See the October 2013 Computer Link at: <http://www.nncug.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/NL-10-13-FNL.pdf>.)

Throughout his talk, Rob passed around examples of different storage media.

**There are two basic types of storage media – Magnetic and Solid State. However, optical storage may still provide a method of relatively long term data storage.**

**Magnetic Storage:** First, Rob noted that physical media, for example punch cards, is extinct for computing. **The most common form of magnetic storage is found in hard drives.** Soft drives (such as tapes and floppy

disks) are obsolete. Currently the maximum capacity of hard drives is 4 terabytes (TB). The 4 TB limits of hard drives dictate the use of a desktop computer.

A hard drive in a desktop computer can have 4 or 5 platters to store data on each surface area. Additional storage usually can be installed in a desktop computer or attached to it. A desktop will use a 3.5 inch drive and a laptop will use a 2.5 inch one. A laptop hard drive uses a lower number of data storage

platters with a maximum a capacity of about 1.5 TB. Laptop capacity can be expanded by the use of a USB flash drive which functions as an external drive. In addition, an external hard drive may be attached to a laptop via a USB port. **Magnetic storage devices can fail quickly or gradually. They sometimes give warning of forthcoming failure.**

**Solid State Storage:** These storage devices commonly can be Solid State Drives (SSD), USB Thumb drives or "sticks",



**Rob Mink**

*Photo by: Bruce Mc Millan*

and flash memory cards. Basically, these devices are made of transistors and capacitors in the desired format and size. Data life can be from 8 years to over 100 years, depending upon the temperature in which they are used and stored. The greater the capacity, the higher the price! However, over time, the prices for a given size device usually drop. **The drawback for these solid state devices as backups is that they can suffer sudden and catastrophic failure.**

**Solid State Technology:** This comes in single layer or multilayer forms. It is made from Floating gate MOSFET NAND FlipFlops. Floating gates keep data for a very long time - 80 years was mentioned. Even though the technology is quite difficult for the average user to understand, one sees the products everywhere - for example, tablets and memory cards. Rob was asked why sudden failures occur. Reasons can be a bad interface with a chip or sudden drops can kill a device. The technology still is immature, so it is not good at recognizing failure. He does not trust flash drive back ups considering the risk of sudden failure. (In response to a question about photograph storage, Rob indicated that, in actual practice, photos by the average home user could be stored on magnetic media. Alternatively, while photos can be stored on flash drives, Rob counseled that is probably safest to burn them a CD.)

**Optical Storage Technology:** This includes CDs (read only and read-write), DVDs (in various types such as read only, read-write, dual layer that are burned on each side), and Blu-ray disks (in similar types). Optical storage media can be normal or archival in nature, depending upon the dye material used. **Best are gold or silver dyes found in the more expensive disks. Normal grade disks are other colors such as green or blue. (Rob noted that it is best to stay away from DVD's with a purple colored dye.)** Expect a burned disk to last from 2 to 25 years. For critical data, Rob advised that it is wise to burn pairs of disks. Then if it is needed, recovery can be made by combining data from both disks. It is unlikely that both disks would fail in the exact same place. Optical media is cheap and comes in capacities of 650 megabytes to 125 giga-

bytes. Data can be burned in a single write session or multi-write sessions depending on the media used. The former is locked after the initial write session, and the latter can be written to or erased many times. The latter method is less reliable, and somewhat less readable by devices other than the one that was used to create the original disk.

**Interfaces:** Rob described a wide range of interface types. Internal interfaces in computers include SATA, IDE, and SCSI/SAS types. Some need a connector to the power supply to function. External interfaces include Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI), SATA, USB, and Firewire.

**Back Ups:** There are **two major strategies for data backups**. First, backups can be kept **offsite** using cloud storage firms such as Carbonite or Spider Oak. Costs vary, but one should estimate about \$1.00 per gigabyte per year. Relatively limited cloud storage may be available for free. Second, one can use onsite storage. There are a few different types of onsite storage. Onsite magnetic storage includes using RAID and NAS hard drive configurations. (Different RAID type numbers indicate different configurations of hard drive storage.) **Onsite** optical storage, such as CD's or DVD's is a good means of back up storage, but is labor intensive for burning the data to disks. (Burn disks in pairs and not automatically.) Tape backups have changed and now are smaller than cassettes. However, tape backups are slow, and there are may be a number of failures. **Rob indicated that the best approach is to have backups on two optical disks and another type of storage such as hard drives.** Some computers have a removable hard drive bay and one can use several hard drives to have a rotating backup plan. This approach is useful for whole hard drive backups.

To sum up, Rob presented an extensive list of the available choices when choosing to back up data, as well as highlighting the changes in standards that has occurred over a relatively short time in computer technology. Thanks for the update!!

**Anne Moss**

## Tablet SIG

If you received iPad, iPod, iPhone, or any type of Android device during the holidays, please join us to explore these devices.

The Tablet SIG will **meet to have a refresher on the basics of using these devices.**

There will be time to get answers to your questions on other topics. All are welcome!

The SIG will meet at the **Lancaster Community Library (LCL)** on Tuesday, **January 21, at 10:00 a.m.**

**BJ McMillan**

---

### January Photo SIG Meeting

The Photo SIG will have an exhibit in the Lancaster Community Library in February.

**The January meeting of the SIG will be devoted to cutting mats and mounting photos.** Come and learn from Marianne Miller!

Please bring your photos, frames and mat materials and we'll try to help you cut a mat. If you have mats or mat cutting tools, please bring them and help or learn!

There may be time to comment on photos, so bring yours if you want to.

**The SIG will meet on January 14, at 09:30 a.m.** in the Community Room of the LCL, Kilmarnock, VA.

**Ed.**

## Nomination Search Committee

A Nomination Search Committee is being established to seek candidates for election to the NNCUG Board positions for the year 2014-2015. Elections will be held at the March 2014 Membership meeting.

**Board vacancies are anticipated.**

**The NNCUG needs you!** Please consider serving on this Committee, or running for an office. Offices are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the January 18 and February 15, 2014 Membership Meetings.

**Please contact Rob Mink**, President at (804) 436-5615, or e-mail him at [rob@nncomputerconsultants.com](mailto:rob@nncomputerconsultants.com) to volunteer or get further information.

**Ed.**

---

### STILL WANTED: Newsletter Editor

**The NNCUG is searching for a new Newsletter Editor, effective with the March 2014 edition of the Computer Link.**

After four years, **Bruce Mc Millan will be resigning from this key position.**

Bruce is willing to train the new editor and serve as back up if needed. The NNCUG will supply any needed publishing software.

**If interested, please contact a NNCUG Officer or Bruce at (804) 580-8666.**

**Ed.**

*The Northern Neck Computer Users' Group is not a part of or representative of any manufacturer, product, reseller, dealer, consultant, or business. Information appearing in this newsletter is for the use and information of the members and friends of the group. Permission is granted to reprint any or all of the material found here by similar non-profit, non-commercial publications provided credit is given to the author of the article and "The Computer Link" is given as the source of the information. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect those of the organization.*

## Get Plain Text

*By Linda Gonse, Editor & Webmaster, Orange County PC Users' Group, CA  
October 2013 issue, Nibbles & Bits  
www.orcopug.org  
editor (at) orcopug.org*

It's probably safe to say that everyone has copied text from a webpage at some time and pasted it into an email or into a Word-like program. So, of course, you can relate to my dismay of pasting the type complete with its formatting riding piggyback on it.

I always have to stop what I'm doing and unformat and reformat the type, so it blends in with what I'm working on.

I can hear "old timers" yelling, "Notepad! Use Notepad!"

That's true. And, it's a good option. I'm using Windows XP (still), so I have a shortcut to Notepad on my Start menu. It's very easy to click on Start while I have my browser open and click to open Notepad to paste the web text, then recopy it from Notepad, and repaste the text into a document.

But, I found a simpler method.

Really. There is no learning curve.

I only have to click once after copying from a webpage and then I can immediately paste unformatted text into anything anywhere!

With our typical complicated programs to work with, this just doesn't seem possible. Or, maybe alchemy might be involved!

The short of it is that this is true, no hocus pocus. It is possible with a tiny program called Get Plain Text.

It's only 70Kb and it doesn't add an icon to your system tray or grab any memory when you use it.

It works in less than a second to remove text formatting, including fonts, sizes, colors, and embedded images. It just leaves plain text.

Download the program from the developer's webpage (clipdiary.com) at <http://bit.ly/1bzFuea> or a secondary download site at <http://www.softpedia.com/get/PORTABLE-SOFTWARE/Office/Clipboard/Portable-Get-Plain-Text.shtml>. Save it to your preferred disk location. Click on the program to run it.

Add the icon that launches Get Plain Text to your Quick Launch bar or favorite program launcher.

I keep it on my Quick Launch bar. As soon as I copy something to the clipboard, I click on the Get Plain Text icon. Then, I paste the text anywhere I desire. That's it.

When I use Get Plain Text, no window opens. There are no dialog boxes or preferences to select. There are no flags, bells, or whistles to tell me it is finished. It simply works fast, silently, and unobtrusively.

What else? Oh, yeah. It's free!

---

## Internet as an Information Resource

**Brian Riley** will be the lead off speaker at the January Membership Meeting for a three part series devoted **to using the Internet as an Information Resource**. For example, The "Yellow Pages" is no longer the Bible to find goods and services!

The **Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 18, at RW-C**. Coffee and donuts at 09:30 a.m., and the meeting starts at 10:00.

**Ed.**

## December 2013 Meeting Notes

TREASURER'S REPORT: 84 members.  
Treasury balance: \$4,220.58.

**Betty Lehman**, former NNCUG Webmaster, fell and broke her hip. She is recovering at the Orchard in Warsaw.

**Tom Duke**, former Computer Link Editor, thanked **Rob Mink** for his professional assistance in getting his computer back up to speed.

**The Target Stores security breach situation affecting up to 40 million users was discussed.** The problems that exist at Target could be in any large organization. It is possible to buy a \$10 chipped card, that can be read wirelessly and which changes numbers at each use. One can also buy an aluminum cover for a credit card that prevents radio frequency scanning by nearby persons. Amazon stores assign a number to be read one time only; this is said to solve the problem. **Another member advised not using the auto save function in browsers** that save your personal data and credit card numbers which are frequently used to make online purchases and can be accessed with one click. The problem is those numbers are in one convenient spot on your computer that a hacker can access.

### SIG REPORTS:

**PHOTO:** **Linda Boyatzies** reported that the **PhotoSIG will have a photo exhibit** at the Lancaster Community Library (LCL) during February 2014. The limit on the number of entries is dictated by wall space, and each photo may or may not be for sale. In support of the forthcoming show, **the next PhotoSIG meeting (January 14)** will cover mat cutting. Attendees are encouraged to bring a photo to be worked on at the meeting. The group meets the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the LCL.

**TABLET:** Meets at **10:00 a.m.** on the third Tuesday (**January 21**) at the LCL. The January meeting topic will be a **review of tablet basics**. At the last meeting there were troubles with Internet connections, so the group spent a very informative time problem solving!

**GENEALOGY:** Next meeting is **February 13** (Thursday) at 1PM in the Auditorium at Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury. **Topic: Finding ancestors using the U.S. Federal Census of Population.** The Federal Census is one of the easiest ways to locate where ancestors lived and when they lived there. The meeting will cover: where Census data may be found online; search strate-

gies; using extraction forms; and saving a digital image of a Census record. Ann Thompson is the leader. She can be reached at [ann@ann-thompson.net](mailto:ann@ann-thompson.net).

**GUEST SPEAKER: Rob Mink** presented the subject of **Storage Media, Interfaces, and Backups**.

**RAFFLE: Mary Stewart** - HP 8" Digital Picture Frame; **Bill Gray** - 32 GB Flash Drive with case; and **Rob Mink** - Logitech Anywhere mouse. **Carol Hallett** - runner up prize of a Toshiba 500 GB Hard Drive/Case.

**Anne Moss**

### Membership Report - December 2013

Welcome - Jim Schmidt

**RENEW** January 2014 - John Bowles, Carol Hallett  
Anne Moss, Bill Pregnall, Barbara Shore  
Barbara Touchette

**RENEW** December 2013 - Peter Kane, Rob Mink

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

# 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 [ann@ann-thompson.net](mailto:ann@ann-thompson.net)  
to get on the mail list for announcements.

**PHOTOSHOP SIG**  
Second Tuesday, every month, 9:30 a.m.  
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock  
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831 or message  
[Bird@nnwifi.com](mailto:Bird@nnwifi.com)

**TABLET SIG**  
Third Tuesday, every month, 10:00 a.m.  
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock  
Contact B.J. McMillan at 580-8666



**GGCWEB.COM LLC.**  
WEB HOSTING • DESIGN • E-COMMERCE

SUE FOULKES  
Managing Partner

74-B South Main St.  
Kilmarnock, VA 22482  
[sfoulkes@ggcweb.com](mailto:sfoulkes@ggcweb.com)

local: 804-435-6909  
toll free: 800-457-3529  
fax: 804-435-3420



**The Computer Wizard**  
Service • Repair • Support • Recovery

**ROBERT HEADLEY**  
Owner / Technical Specialist

P.O. Box 2013  
235 North Main St.  
Kilmarnock, Va. 22482

phone: 804.435.1310  
[rheadley@thecomputerwizard.us](mailto:rheadley@thecomputerwizard.us)  
[www.thecomputerwizard.us](http://www.thecomputerwizard.us)

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

## Coming Attractions

Membership—Jan. 18, Internet Searching, RW-C  
Genealogy - Feb. 13, U.S. Federal Census, RW-C  
Photo SIG - Jan 14, 09:30 am, Lancaster Community Library  
Tablet SIG - Jan 21, 10:00 am, Lancaster Community Library