

The

Computer Link

February 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

Send newsletter
submissions to Editor

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

The NNCUG Needs YOU!

It is time for a serious discussion about the future of the Northern Neck Computer Users Group. It will start at the website, where we would like you to join in the discussion. The results of that will be discussed at the February Membership Meeting.

There are **two immediate issues** that must be addressed.

First, is a **leadership issue**. Many people have generously contributed to leading the NNCUG over the years! Unfortunately, there appears to be declining interest by members in supporting the NNCUG by undertaking these key roles. There have been no volunteers for the Nominating Committee. This is a key group that attempts to find candidates to run for NNCUG President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-At-Large. The election for new officers is held at the March Membership Meeting. These positions must be filled to ensure orderly functioning of the NNCUG. Furthermore, while there currently are candidates for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Member-At-Large, there are no candidates

for Vice-President. **Candidates are needed! Please consider running for any of these positions.**

Second, a **Computer Link Editor is needed**. Bruce Mc Millan will resign after serving 4 years as Editor. The March edition of the Computer Link is the last one that he will produce. The Computer Link is a key way to keep members of the NNCUG informed of activities and this also serves as a means of publicizing the Group and its activities. Bruce has indicated that he is willing to train a replacement and serve as a backup to the new Editor. To date, no one has even inquired about this position. **If this position is not filled, this vital communications function will be reduced.**

There are **two equally important long-term issues**.

First, we have a **slowly declining membership**. That raises the question of whether the NNCUG is relevant to the interests and needs of its membership. **What must be done to attract and retain members?**

Second, there is a **growing dis-**

connect between our stated purpose and the reality of computing today. In particular, the purpose of the NNCUG is rooted in the IBM-compatible view of computing. With the advent of the Internet and alternate means of computing such as tablets and “smartphones”, computing has changed. The NNCUG has started this change by creating the TABLET SIG. Yet, such is not even considered in the NNCUG by-laws. **It is time that the purpose and the activities of the NNCUG are examined and any needed changes be codified in the by-laws.**

To start this process and to gain your views as a member of the NNCUG a special section has been created on the NNCUG web site at: <http://www.nncug.net/club-changes-and-problems-discussion/>. You are strongly encouraged to go there, register, and share your ideas and comments as this very important discussion develops.

Finally, and again, please consider serving on the Nominating Committee, running for a NNCUG office, or taking on the key responsibility of editing the Computer Link!

The NNCUG Board

NNCUG Future Discussion and Internet as an Information Resource

The results of the NNCUG Web site discussion about key issues facing the NNCUG will be discussed at the February Membership Meeting. Then **Brian Riley** will be the lead off speaker on 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, February 15, at RW-C.** Coffee and donuts at 09:30 a.m., and the meeting starts at 10:00.

Ed.

Genealogy SIG Meeting

The February Genealogy SIG meeting will focus on finding ancestors using the U.S. Federal Census of Population. This will include: (1) where census data may be found online; (2) search strategies; (3) using extraction forms; and (4) saving a digital image of a Census record.

Attendees then will break into groups according to their interests. Three of these groups will discuss individual family history software titles. The fourth group is for those who are aspiring genealogists who have yet to start their family histories.

The Genealogy SIG will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 13 at the RW-C Auditorium.

Ann Thompson

February Photo SIG Meeting

The February meeting of the SIG will be an “open meeting” devoted to discussing your photos and any tools or techniques that you wish to share with others.

If you have participated in the Photo SIG show currently hanging at the Lancaster Community Library, the SIG would be very interested in hearing about your photos. Think of making a mini “Artist’s Statement”. You could bring a copy of your photos on a USB thumb drive and show the group.

The SIG will meet on February 11, at 09:30 a.m. in the Community Room of the Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock, VA.

Ed.

Tablet SIG

The February Tablet SIG meeting will be devoted to downloading apps and installing them on your device. In addition, please be ready to share one or two of your favorite apps with the group.

If you need help in registering Apple or Google gift cards to buy apps to download onto your device, help will be available. Be sure to bring your gift cards.

The SIG will meet in the **Lancaster Community Library** on Tuesday, **February 18, at 10:00 a.m.**

B.J. McMillan

Goodbye XP

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
October 2013 issue, BUG Bytes
www.bcug.com
n2nd (@) att.net

On April 8, 2014 Microsoft will stop supporting Windows XP and Office 2003. After that date there will be no new security updates, non-security hot-fixes, free or paid assisted support options, or on-line technical content **updates**. However, all your software will continue to work just as well as it did on April 7, so you needn't panic, but it would be prudent to come up with a rational transition plan. There are three choices: (1) continue to use XP, but take some precautions, (2) keep your present hardware, but upgrade the software, and (3) purchase new hardware and software. The hardware and software vendors as well as the media in which they advertise prefer that you take the third approach, but let's consider all of them.

There are many advantages to staying with XP, which may not hold with the other two approaches.

- Your present hardware works with it.
 - Your present applications run under it.
 - It supports your present peripherals.
 - You don't have to learn anything new.
- It costs less than the alternatives.

The main disadvantage is that as time goes on, you become increasingly more vulnerable to attack over the Internet and by malware. You can reduce this and its consequences by the following.

- Before April 8, 2014, use Microsoft Update to install the latest patches to all your Microsoft software.
- Update all your anti-malware software, and check that the vendor will continue to support it for XP after April 8. If not, change to a vendor that will.
- If you are connected to the Internet through a router, install the latest firmware in it. If your PC connects directly to your

ISP's modem, purchase a hardware router, and update its firmware if necessary. For good measure, if you haven't already, install a software XP firewall.

- Be very careful about what you download, and avoid doing it if possible. Review your backup program; improve it if needed, and resolve to follow it rigorously.

The wording on the MS Website implies that old patches will remain available, but why take a chance? Update your software early, as the download rate may slow near the deadline. At the present time, about 35 per cent of the computers in the world use XP. This is a sizable market for anti-malware vendors, and I would expect them to continue supporting XP for some time. Your first line of defense against Internet aggression is your router and its firewall. Most likely, your ISP's modem also includes a firewall, but how careful is he about keeping it up-to-date? You don't know. With your own router, you have ability to keep it up to date, and as a result, having one is desirable even if you have only one PC. Despite all your precautions, as time goes on, and the bad guys find more XP vulnerabilities, your risk will increase. Be wary of any download, including e-mail attachments from friends. The best malware defense is to keep it off your PC. Your last defense is your backup program. Any information you haven't backed up on an external drive is one mouse click or one device failure away from trash. Although its most important to back up your data, you should in addition make an image backup of everything on your hard disk, because once XP becomes an orphan, applications and drivers for it will become increasingly difficult to find.

The second alternative is to keep your hardware, but change your operating system.

- Your vulnerability will be less than if you stay with XP.
- If your PC is old, it may not support some current operating systems.
- Your present applications may not run under the new OS.

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.

- Drivers may not be available for some of your peripherals, requiring you to replace the devices.
- You will have to take care during the transition not to lose any data. You will have to learn new ways of working.

The hazard with this approach is that to install a new operating system, you generally must format your hard disk, but you must first insure that all your data is safe and readable by the applications in your new OS. For example, if all your financial records are stored in Quicken files and there is no financial program available in your new operating system that can understand them, you essentially have lost all your financial records. A second problem is to insure that your current hardware supports the new operating system before you format your disk. If you are considering a newer version of Windows, run the Windows Upgrade Advisor (available at <http://windows.microsoft.com/is-is/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor> for Windows 7). Don't forget to check your peripherals; I found that there was no Windows 7 driver for my scanner and had to buy a new one when I upgraded from XP. If your PC is compatible except for insufficient RAM, this is an inexpensive upgrade, even if done by a shop. (You should have at least one Gigabyte of RAM, even if you stay with XP.)

Consider Linux, especially for a secondary PC. I've converted two XP machines to Xubuntu (<http://xubuntu.org/>), which is more responsive than XP on old hardware. It has the advantage that you can try it out with a "live-CD," which is bootable from a CD drive. It will be slow in this mode, but since it doesn't make any changes to the hard disk, you are just a reboot away from XP. While running Xubuntu, all the files on your hard disk are available, so you can check whether Linux applications can read them. (Instructions on how to create a live CD or DVD in Windows are available at <http://www.ubuntu.com/download/help/try-ubuntu-before-you-install>.) If you have room on your disk or can add a second one, consider a dual-boot system in which you can run either system. (All your Windows files will be accessible in Linux, and Windows applications are available that can read Linux disk partitions.) However, Linux is not Windows, which means there are many differences between the two systems. Try to find a sympathetic, experienced Linux user to help you get started, especially if you are less

than comfortable in adventure mode.

The third alternative, buying new hardware and software is the easy and safe, but expensive. You are probably best off to purchase new components. XP-era processors, RAM, displays, and hard disks are woefully inadequate for any current OS. Keyboards and mice now cost just a few dollars, and your old ones may use obsolete connectors. You can keep your printer and scanner if drivers are available for the new OS; your old speakers will be fine.

- Your old PC with your data, applications, and peripherals remains available for use.
- You will probably have to purchase new applications for your new OS and probably some new peripherals, especially if the existing ones are several years old. There will be a learning curve for the new system.

Spend some extra money; in particular, get more RAM and a larger disk than you think you can get by with.

I haven't considered a piecemeal hardware upgrade, because I don't think it's cost-effective. Most modern CPUs are incompatible with XP-era motherboards; new motherboards are usually incompatible with XP-era cases and expansion cards; and old RAM is incompatible with both modern CPUs and motherboards. My preference is to get a new PC up and running with all the essential software installed, and keep the old PC operating until you are comfortable with the new one and are sure that it has all the applications you need and that all your data has been successfully transferred to it.

STILL WANTED: Computer Link
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 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 talk with Bruce at (804) 580-8666.

Ed.

Nomination Search Committee

A Nomination Search Committee **NEEDS to be 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 February 15, 2014 Membership Meetings.

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

Ed.

Annual Photo SIG Exhibit

The annual Photo Special Interest Group exhibit will open on February 3, in the Lancaster Community Library.



Flower

Photo by: Bruce Mc Millan

Above is just a sample of what you will see! Please stop in and see what these photographers have been doing.

There are a wide variety of interests represented at this show. It always is fun to see what these photographers have been up to!

Ed.

Membership Report - January 2014

Welcome - None

RENEW February 2014 - Margaret Alderson
Phil Allan, Simeon Burnette, Susan Christopher
Fred Cook, Bill Gray, Joe Hecht, Betty Lehman
BJ McMillan, David Mower, Joyce Page
Brandon Rohr, Bob Shultz

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

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

January 2014 Meeting Notes

The January 18, 2014 Membership Meeting was cancelled. Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury unexpectedly needed to use all of its meeting facilities.

The February Membership Meeting is scheduled for February 15 in the Auditorium at RW-C.

Anne Moss

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 Westminister-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
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

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

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
www.thecomputerwizard.us

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

Coming Attractions

Membership— Feb. 15, Future & Internet Searching, RW-C
Genealogy - Feb. 13, U.S. Federal Census, RW-C
Photo SIG - Feb 11, 09:30 am, Lancaster Community Library
Tablet SIG - Feb 18, 10:00 am, Lancaster Community Library