

The

Computer Link

October 2010

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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Send newsletter
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➔ **DEADLINE** ➔
for **NEXT ISSUE**,
One week after meeting

Google's "Other" Tools

B. J. McMillan, formerly the President of the Northern Neck Computer Users Group and a frequent speaker at the general Group meetings, spoke on the topic of "other" tools provided by Google.

B. J. noted that Google is more than "just" a search engine.

She presented information about some of the lesser-known features that are available on Google. Many of the tools can be found by clicking on the "More" menu choice on the upper left corner of the Google entry page (and in some cases on the "Even More" choice on the "More" drop-down menu).

The Calendar program can be used to keep track of events or "To Do" items. The Calendar is stored on Google servers and therefore can be accessed from any computer. A fun item to add is the Weather function that provides up to four days of forecasts to the Calendar. "To Do" items can be added to the Calendar, and invitations or notifi-

cations can be sent to specific individuals as well as e-mail/cell phone alerts to the originator. Calendars can be shared with the public or only with specified people. In addition, one can create more than one calendar. For example, a user could create a personal calendar as well as additional calendars

for groups for which the user has scheduling responsibilities. To use the Calendar tool, B. J. noted that individuals would have to create an additional and separate account from any G-Mail account they may have.

B. J. demonstrated the Google News tool that is both a news aggregator

and news search tool. One can get "Top Stories" (most read), Recent News (breaking news), and local news reports. Under the "News for You" feature, the user can choose specific categories or topics of interest such as figure skating and deselect other broader categories such as



B. J. McMillan

Photo by Bruce Mc Millan

Continued on Page 4

The Control Panel -- Extremely Useful

By Sandy Berger

www.compukiss.com

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Just as you can use a car without manipulating anything under the hood, you can also use a computer without changing any settings. However, at a certain point you will want to correct a setting, uninstall a program, change the way your mouse works, or add another user to your computer. All of these functions and many more are found in the Windows Control Panel. Don't worry though; the Control Panel is much easier to navigate than the cables, wires, and mechanisms that you find under the hood of a car....and you can use the tools in the Control Panel without getting your hands dirty.

In geek-speak, the Control Panel is the central location for all of the Windows operating system configuration needs. In everyday terms, it the place where you can work with the many tools that Windows offers to change and customize all of the settings. The Control Panel is part of the Window's operating system's graphical interface. As such, you will find that it consists of easy-to-understand icons that are each labeled as to their function.

The Control Panel has been around since the first version of Windows. Over the years, it has morphed into a very useful set of management tools for your computer. In a car you need to know where the hood release lever is, in Windows, you need to know how to access the Control Panel.

Windows Vista and Windows 7, you can access the Control Panel by clicking on the Start button and choosing Control Panel from the right column of choices. In [Windows XP](#), you will click Start, then choose Control Panel from the left column. If you don't see the Control Panel listed, click on Settings from the left column and then click on Control Panel.

The Control Panel is a little different in [Windows XP](#) than it is in Vista and Windows 7. So let's talk about XP first. By default, the Windows XP Control Panel appears in what is called "Category View". This means that various functions have been put into Categories. Previous versions of Windows showed a list of icons, one for each function, in Windows XP, this is called the "Classic View". When you open the Control Panel in Windows XP if you see several categories listed you are in "Category View". If you see a window full of individual icons, you are in "Classic View". You can change the view by clicking on the words "Switch to Classic View" or "Switch to Category View" which is on the left side of the screen. Check out these two options and see which one you like. You can switch between them quite easily at any time.

In Windows Vista, you have the same choices, but you may have to click on "Control Panel Home" on the left side of the screen before you can click on "Classic View" or "Category View".

Microsoft made some changes in the Control Panel in Windows 7. They have eliminated the name Classic View. In Windows 7 you will see the words "View by" on the upper right side of the screen. Click on the down arrow next to those words and you will have three views to choose from: Category, Large

Icons, or Small Icons. This Icon view is really the same as the Classic View. I prefer to use the Classic or Icon view, but again, you can check out all the views and see which one you like best.

There are 45 icons in the icon view in Windows 7 and about the same number in previous versions. If you look at the Classic or Icon view, you will see that the icons have labels, like Display, Sound, Power Options, Mouse, Keyboard, User Accounts, Folder Options, and Devices and Printers. You can click on any of these icons to open a window that will allow you to adjust, correct, and/or customize the settings of these areas. Take a look around. Check out Mouse area first. When you click on the mouse icon a windows with options will appear. It will have tabs at the top. You can click on each tab to see even more options. If you have never looked at these before you will be amazed at the number of things that you can do to customize your mouse. You can switch the buttons if you are left-handed. You can [speed up](#) and/or slow down the double-click speed. You can change the looks of the pointer. If you are using a mouse with a scroll wheel, you can even change how the wheel behaves.

Try a few things. The only caveat here is to [document](#) the changes that you are making so you can change them back if you want to.

Each of the items in the Control Panel allows you to change the settings in your computer. Look through and open up a few of them. There are hundreds of things that you can change and/or customize in the Windows operating [system](#). Some of the Control Panel items are very useful for everyday tasks in Windows. Be sure to take a look.

Preserving and Restoring Photographs

Linda Boyatzies, an accomplished photographer and Photoshop user, was the featured speaker at the Genealogy SIG meeting on September 9, 2010.

Family photos represent treasures for genealogists. Ancestors take on personalities. Old photos though are frequently damaged or stored improperly. Linda gave a most informative presentation on what steps take to preserve these family heirlooms.

She spoke about how with age photos become brittle, stick together, discolor, fade or darken, are stained, mold or become torn or creased. To protect photos they must be kept from direct light, in a humidity controlled environment and away from pollutants such as household cleaning products. Do not store photos in an attic or basement.

Pollution comes from acid in paper products, plastics, glues, adhesives, dust, dirt, fingerprints and the environment. There are products available for storing photos that guard against these pollutants. Linda showed several acid-free archival type products such as photo sleeves, storage boxes with photo envelopes and sleeves for negatives, buffered paper and an acid-free pen for identification information on photos. Acid-free paper is necessary to separate photos. When framing photos one should use metal opposed to wood and acid-free matting along with protective

glass. If photos are mounted in an album, one should use acid-free corners in an album that has acid-free pages. Those handling old photos should wear cotton gloves to protect the delicate photo surfaces from contamination.

In order to archive photos for future generations, digitizing is an excellent option as it allows for labeling and sharing. It is important though

Digitizing photos is an excellent means of preserving and sharing such fragile and valuable genealogical treasures as old family photographs!

An inexpensive and redundant way to back up digitized photos is to share them with many family members. Ed.

to keep the storage media current, as computer storage technology is constantly evolving. When scanning an old photo to digital format, 1200 dpi optical resolution is best, if one's scanner goes this high.

When identifying a photo, one should use an acid-free pen to write on the back of the photo or on the album pages. A number 2 pencil will work as well. One must be careful not to press so hard that impressions are left in the photo. Information should include a date (approximate if necessary), the full names of the people and their relationship, the location if known and the oc-

casion.

Sharing digitized photos with family is an excellent way to have back-ups. Linda recommends using a text file that corresponds with each photo so that additional pertinent information beyond the basic identification may be included. Online storage is becoming another popular option for sharing photos.

Next, Linda demonstrated several techniques with Photoshop Elements for correcting colors, removing stains, getting rid of blotches and tears. For example, tintypes are frequently very dark. Using the color adjust feature in Photoshop Elements brings out medium tones. The audience was able to see both the original photos and the restoration. The changes were most impressive!

Linda offered these tips for restoring an old photo:

- Focus on the person in the photo;
- Crop to save the best part of the photo;
- Make changes in layers;
- Work in stages as this can become vary tedious; and
- Save work often.

In ending the presentation, Linda provided a list of several websites for storage material and further research on preservation methods.

Ann Thompson

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Google's "Other" Tools

From Page 1.

"sports". A user also can select among various countries as sources of news, or specify the geographic area to be covered in "Local News". The News search tool limits search results only to news items.

Google also has many other specialized search engines. One can use "Product Search" that limits searches to shopping sites and includes a Google Checkout profile function. "Google Books" allows searching for and previewing the contents of books. The "Finance" search presents information about specific companies as well as general financial news. The "Scholar" search tool restricts search results to scholarly journals and

books. This particular search tool can also be used to obtain Federal and State legal opinions.

In addition to search functions, Google has other tools such as "Google Health" that allows one to create a personal health/medical profile and manage personal medical records. B.J emphasized that users should be aware of personal privacy and security concerns when using various Google tools.

For those Windows XP users who would like to have desktop "gadgets" similar to those available to Windows Vista/7 users, Google has many available for download and

installation. These gadgets include different clocks, a calendar, local weather reports, stock market tickers, computer system monitors, note pads and screens to display photographs. The Google Desktop, Sidebar and basic gadgets are obtained by download from <http://desktop.google.com>. The Sidebar where the gadgets are displayed stays on top of all applications, but it can be minimized to the Task/Status Bar.

Many thanks to B. J. for taking us through the lesser frequented corners of the Google program!

Ed.

September Photo of the Month



High Pass Ivy On Shakers

By Marilyn Jurkops

The September Photo-SIG exercise was devoted to experimenting with different digital sharpening techniques. Effects are often subtle when viewed alone, but are noticeable when directly compared to each other. **Ed.**

October Meeting

Computers and the Printing Industry

Dianne Bailey is an employee owner and pre-press projection technician with Worth Higgins & Associates a sheet-fed commercial printer. She will discuss the impact of computers, and the Internet on the printing business over the past 20 years, and how they have impacted her work, and the commercial printing business.

Ed.

September 18 Meeting Notes

MEMBERS ATTENDING: 30 and two guests. A welcome to NCCUG new members Sandra Armstrong, Ginger Klapp, Beverly Wellford, and Linda Williams.

TREASURER'S REPORT:
106 active members

President Chris Christensen announced that the featured speaker for the October General Meeting will be Di-anne Bailey who will discuss the impact that computers and the Internet have had on the printing industry. Dr. Sterling Ransone will speak on the electronic medical records at the November General Meeting.

SIG REPORTS:

PHOTO: PHOTOSIG meets the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Bring a laptop if you can. Each meeting a problem is presented and then the group participates, via laptop, in the "fix" or solution. Photoshop Elements techniques are used, and Elements Version 4 and above is

usable. Jim Sapione, the SIG leader reassured those interested that all levels of skills are represented, and not to worry about terminology. The October meeting topic will be making adjustments to a photo using the Levels function.

B.J. McMillan asked for volunteers who are knowledgeable about golf to photograph a "Wounded Warriors" charity golf tournament in Weems on Thursday, October 7.

GENEALOGY: Ann Thompson briefly reviewed the Linda Boyatzies September 9th presentation concerning restoring and preserving old photographs. The Genealogy SIG meets at RWC every two months at 1 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month.

On November 11, Mike Lyman will discuss the use of CDs, publications and the Internet to determine War of 1812 service. In January, Ann will give a presentation titled "Google Your Family History".

Q AND A TIME: Included a possibly unanswerable prob-

lem, "My wife doesn't like computers."

Also discussed was an older computer that was very slow. Attempts to clean out old email and to defrag actually caused a decrease in storage capacity. The guess was that something in the system was actually doubling information, one suggestion was to look at Microsoft security essentials. Malwarebytes might also be helpful in resolving the issue.

Another person was getting an unasked for media screen whenever he went to Google G-mail, and wondered if it was the Windows 7 system causing the problem. The suggestion was that file association may have been changed, so check out this possibility. Google does a silent update to one's computer, so check the Google installation first.

SPEAKER: **Google's "Other" Tools** by B. J. McMillan. B.J. walked us through several of the less well-known aspects of Google. The Calendar function requires that the user create a user account, that is different from G-mail; this is free. Features that do not require a user account include: Google News; other specialized search engines; Google Health; and Google Translate.

She provided the group with a comprehensive outline of special features. In addition to these notes she emphasized it is important as one uses functions to be aware of privacy concerns.

RAFFLE WINNERS: Chris Christensen – assortment of Memorex CD-RW discs, DVD+R discs, and accessories; Carol Hallett - 8GB flash drive; and David Alberts - Pandigital 8 inch Digital Photo frame.

Anne Moss, Secretary

Membership Report - September 2010

Welcome - Linda Williams, Sandra Armstrong, Beverly Wilford, Ginger Klapp

RENEW October 2010 - Don Beard, Robert Hall, Alta Miller

RENEW September 2010 - Gerry Holmes, Gerald Stiles

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 athompson@kaballero.com
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@kaballero.com*

For a photo treat visit
www.rapptapp.homestead.com

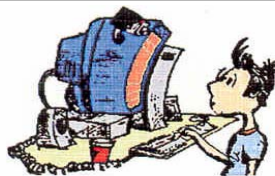


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Software Lessons

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

Coming Attractions

*Membership - October 16th, 10:00 am, Printing Industry
Genealogy - November 11th, 1:00 pm, War of 1812 Service
Photo SIG - October 12th, 09:30 am, Kilmarnock Library*