

# The

# Computer Link

February 2009

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**

## Bill McCrosky Demonstrates Google Features

NNCUG member, Bill McCrosky demonstrated many of the "other" Google features besides its search engine at the January meeting.

He explained how since the internet went commercial in about 1995 it has grown exponentially. Google came along in 98-99 with its search engine and rapidly became most popular for finding gazillions of responses to short inquiries about almost anything.

Now Google has added a good competitor for MS Outlook Express with Gmail. Google's inbox is on its own servers, not your computer hard drive, freeing up space for other data. Google literally has tons of storage space. It is simple to initiate, clicking on gmail on the front page. It blocks spam automatically. It is easy to create and send mail and attachments.

Google also has "igoogle" which can be customized without programmers. Igoogle lets you put in a phone number and find an address almost anywhere. Sometimes you can even get a picture of it.

Google can also give you accurate directions to almost anywhere on America's road system with map search. Don't leave home without a print out of the shortest directions with estimated times and accurate distanced information. In some cases one can have photos of places of interest along the way and near the destination to

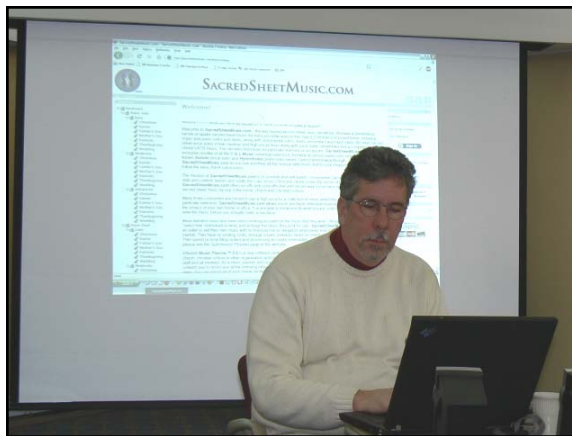
make it easier to find the place.

If you want to know the most popular hits for certain information, thus finding out what the crowd knows, Google publishes how many have

sought the same information. Google makes its millions from advertisers and can demand higher prices by tracking viewer hits.

By clicking on the front page links for news, shopping, finance, videos, or just type in a latitude and longitude, Google will answer almost any question or provide desired information for anywhere in the world in a flash.

Bill McCrosky showed us how and we are glad he did. **Ed.**



**Bill McCrosky** Photo - Chris Christensen

## Consumer Electronics Show 2009

*Written by Joe Nuvolini,*  
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The trip to Las Vegas was uneventful. The line to get a cab was about 20–25 minutes long as many were arriving for the show. The Somerset House Motel was surprisingly pleasant. The room had two beds, lots of closet space, a nice bathroom, and a kitchenette with a frig, sink, and stove. The walk from the motel to the press room in South Hall was about 15 minutes.

Wednesday evening, I attended the **Sony press conference** at the LVCC. The presentation lasted about 30 minutes and was about all the “new toys” they would be showing at CES. One was the Sony Vaio P series. It is an Ultra Mobile PC (UMPC) weighing 1.4 lbs with wireless WAN/LAN, an 8” hi res screen and built in GPS. It runs about \$900. They showed some of their Bravia LDC HDTV’s in the 26” to 56” range. Other Sony items were their 10–12 Mp digital cameras and digital picture frames. It was a nice affair with wine, beer, cheese and crackers, and fruit.

The press room featured sweet rolls and Starbucks coffee for breakfast. Chatted with member Frank Fraser

on my ASUS using Skype. It worked fine. While checking out Skype, I found my daughter, Marie, in Portland online so I got to see her and my granddaughter, Sara.

The South Hall opened early the first day so I hit the floor at the opening gun. Stopped at the SDCA (that’s an FLA for SD Card Association). They reported that the next generation of **SD cards** (SDXC) will hold up to two



terabytes of data and will have read/write speeds of 104 Mb per second with a road map to 300 Mb per second. Hopefully we will see them later this year. At that rate you could buy a camera for a newborn with one of these cards and take photos his/her whole life and never erase any. Imagine, one’s whole life on an SD card. UMPCs were everywhere at this show. I had no idea how popular they had become. I spent some time in the morning of the first day in the South Hall, Central Hall, and North Hall (automotive area). I was working my way over to Piero’s for Lunch@Piero’s sponsored by

Pat Meier Johnson. I missed this event last year and wanted to make sure to get there first thing this year. Pat was as lovely and gracious as ever. They did not serve lunch this year, but I had planned to have lunch at the Press Room.

I attended the **Sandisk** press briefing. They announced several new items. The first was their line of SSDs (Solid State Drives). They now have them in sizes up to 240 GB. Prices range from \$149 for a 60 GB to \$499 for a 240 GB; still a bit pricey. Next was Slot Music. These are devices that play pre-loaded micro SD cards. We all were given a slot player. It will have to wait until I get home to report on it. They also have a **slot radio** that plays the micro SDs and is also an FM radio. It will sell for about \$99.99. Slot radio cards will run about \$39.99 but will be loaded with music. A couple of other items of news: iTunes will change their pricing structure with songs going from \$.69 to \$1.39, depending on the popularity of the song. They will also no longer be protected.

While at CES, I watched the BCS football championship; first half at the Riviera and the second half in my room. Was glad to see Florida win and also to see that Utah was rated #2! At lunch on Thursday, I sat next to a gentleman from Rome whose family had relatives in Civita di Bagnoregio, one of my favorite spots in Italy. I saw

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## How can I keep my PC clean and tidy?

*Written by Gabe Goldberg,*  
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Like changing your car's oil or replacing your home's air conditioner filter, a little PC cleaning pays off with a faster, more reliable, and longer-lasting computer.

Although nothing suggested here is either rocket science or inherently dangerous, always follow the medical adage, "First, **do no harm**". So don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable (perhaps have a more experienced person clean up while you watch and learn), and back up your system and data. Then reboot, to get a clean start, and don't open any programs,

Before starting, to measure what your cleanup deletes, **determine how full** your hard drive is. Open My Computer, Right Click your hard drive (usually labeled "Local Disk (C:)"), and click Properties. Note how much space is used and free, then close the dialog box.

Next, use Windows' built-in **disk cleaning** tool. Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup, and the drive to clean, likely C. Choose what to clean; default selections are usually what you need. To be extra thorough, if your system has been running problem free, click the More Options tab and then Clean Up System Restore. Confirm your choice and click OK.

Delete Web **browser temporary files**. Using Internet Explorer, click Tools on the Menu Bar, Internet Options, and Delete Files un-

der the General tab. Other browsers provide similar functions, sometimes using "cache" to refer to the collection of temporary files.

Delete unneeded personal files, **items outdated** and no longer used. While most Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, etc.) store their files in the My Documents folder, you may have changed this default location. And other apps likely have their own favorite places to stash files. Look around, since cluttered files make Windows work harder to get things done and waste time and resources when they're backed up. If you collect photos, music and such, delete those you no longer want or need, perhaps saving them on CD/DVD or ISB drive. Sorting files by size or date helps find deletion candidates.

If you run PC-based email software, it's worth periodically purging Sent and Trash folders, perhaps **pitching material** older than a certain date. Then look for a Compact Folders option, sometimes on the File pull-down menu, which squeezes out unused space from email folders.

**Weed out software** no longer used or useful by uninstalling applications with Window's Control Panel Add/Remove Software tool.

The Recycle Bin, which preserves erased files for recovery until it's emptied, has likely grown during this cleanup process. To empty it, Right Click its Windows desktop icon and click Empty Recycle Bin. Note that programs such as Norton Utilities may offer other cleanup options for the **Recycle Bin** and other Windows components.

Finally, remember that when writing to your hard drive, Windows places bits of each

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**Consumer Electronics** *from Page 2*

him again at the Victorinox press conference. More on that later.

The Central Hall was loaded with **big screen LCD panels** from an assortment of vendors with spectacular high definition displays. I spent some time wandering around there. As mentioned earlier, Victorinox, makers of Swiss Army knives, held an affair for the press at the end of the third day. Their big news item was the announcement of Presentation Pro. Many of you have seen their knives. Well, Presentation Pro lets you load a presentation on their flash drive which is part of a Swiss Army knife. The presentation data is encrypted when loaded on the drive using an algorithm based on your finger print so it is totally secure. The unit also has an LED pointer for use during the presentation. The button to advance the slides is also on the unit, using bluetooth technology. Victorinox has been in the business of making **Swiss Army knives** for close to 125 years and has always tried to stay on the cutting edge of technology. It was quite an impressive presentation which, by the way, was made using their new device. The attendees received a device which looks like a pocket knife but, in fact, contains a flash drive, pen and flashlight. The flash drive contained their press kit.

On Saturday I went over to the Sands/Venetian area to see what all was in that venue. It was home for many gadget devices as well as the home for the Asian vendors'

displays. One really neat device I saw was by **Pogoplug**. This unit is about the size of the electrical conversion transformer I take to Italy with me each year. It plugs into an AC wall outlet. There are two jacks on the other side. Into one you plug your external USB hard drive. Into the second, you plug an RG45 CAT5 cable from your router. You log into the vendor's Web site and register the units registration number, your e-mail address, and password. Once registered, you can **access the drive from anywhere** in the world. It then appears as a local drive on the computer you are using until you log off. Pretty neat. It runs about \$79.

Speaking of remote access, I have been writing daily reports from my home desktop computer using logmein.com, which I wrote about a few months ago. It works great. I even downloaded Windows 7 beta onto my home desktop when it was released that weekend. It was about 2.5 GB so it took a while. However, the ISO file was sitting there for me when I got home. I plan to borrow an unused computer from the office to run it on. I'm sure I will have to add a bit of RAM.

By Sunday, the last day, many of the attendees had departed so there was not a lot of activity. The effects of the recession were obvious at this year's show. There were fewer vendors. Attendance was down 23% from last year (110,000 versus 140,000). Hopefully, if the economy improves a bit this year, next year the show will return to its old robust size. That's it for CES 2009. I look forward to CES 2010!

<p><b>PC Clean</b> <i>from Page 3</i></p> <p>file in the next available open space on the hard drive.</p> <p>While Windows can reassemble them, having many files fragmented slows access to them. So, to store all files as single entities, periodically <b>defragment the hard drive</b>. To do this, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter, select a drive, and click</p>	<p>Defragment.</p> <p>When finished, <b>compare</b> the amount of hard drive space used and free to what you saw initially. If this is the first cleanup you've done in a while, the amount of space recovered may surprise you.</p> <p>Many books give much more <b>detailed instructions</b> for PC cleanups. Search Amazon.com for "degunking windows" and "cleaning win-</p>	<p>dows" to see choices (but don't be distracted by instructions for cleaning house, office, and car windows!).</p> <p>This article first appeared on the Tiptet Web site, &lt;www.tiptet.com&gt; and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to Tiptet and the author. It should be unchanged and this paragraph must be included. Please e-mail the author at <a href="mailto:tiptet@gabegold.com">tiptet@gabegold.com</a> when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense. Tiptet's free newsletter provides weekly computer tips.</p>
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## MINUTES OF NNCUG BOARD MEETING, Feb. 12, 2009

President BJ McMillan called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm, on Thursday, 2-12-09. Present were Vice President Chris Christensen and Secretary Don Beard. Tom Duke, *Computerlink* editor, Jim Sapione, photo SIG leader and Betty Lehman, Webmaster, were also invited and present.

BJ McMillan noted that it was becoming more difficult to find outside speakers.— due to travel time and some local companies have gone out of business. The Board discussed possible ideas for **member presentations** based on surveys of members' interests. Members will need to volunteer to research and present a topic.

### January Photo



*Windy Day* Richard Davis

ster Canterbury Foundation. The Board also decided not to renew the post office box. All bills will be directed to the Treasurer and we will use the Treasurer's address for any IRS or Virginia State Corporation filings. Possible purchase of a **screen for the Photo SIG** was discussed; Jim Sapione will research products available.

It was the consensus of the Board that President McMillan explore with the Genealogical Society of the Northern Neck of Virginia, combining their bi-monthly meetings with the NNCUG **Genealogical SIG**. The SIG meetings would be in the off months and be led by Ann Thompson, who

The Board voted to make a donation of \$100 to the Lancaster Community Library, and \$100 to the Rappahannock Westmin-

has volunteered to restart this SIG. No one has stepped forward to

take over the Beginners SIG. It was the consensus of those present to discontinue it, and instead, hold a **3 hour Computer Lab** or training session once per quarter, rotated between the Kilmarnock and Heathsville libraries. The membership will be asked if these sessions should be open to the public or limited to members. Finally, the consensus was to explore the possibility of having an **annual NNCUG luncheon or picnic**.  
*BJ McMillan, President*

## Minutes of NNCUG January Meeting

The January 17th meeting of NNCUG opened at 9:30 am by President B.J. McMillan at the RW-C auditorium. The attendance total was 34.

Jim Sapione briefed on the Photo Sig activities. **The annual photo contest will occur at the March meeting.** Members were reminded to participate in the APCUG national photo contest with entries due by the end of January. The genealogy special interest group will be re-started shortly. The Beginner's SIG ends this month and will resume in a new format soon. Nominations were requested for the **General Election of the Board of Directors** to be held at the March meeting.

A broad question/answer period was conducted by B.J. McMillan.

Bill McCrosky conducted an extensive description and demonstration of many of the features of the Google software. He showed good uses for a surprising number of the less well known programs.

The meeting adjourned at 11 o'clock and was followed by a Beginner's Sig class.

*Don Beard, Secretary*

## Membership Report February 2009

**RENEW** February 2009 – Margaret Alderson, Susan Christopher, Joanne Crichton, Jerry Hawley, Alden Head, Susan Heath, Mary Jenks, Betty Lehman, Doris Lundegard, BJ McMillan, David Mower, Joyce Page, Clark Schumacher, Bob Shultz, Bev Wierbinski.

**RENEW** January 2009 – Sue Broadway, Egbert Dees, William Gibson, Carol Hallett, Anne Moss

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](mailto:bevnjim@netscape.com) no later than 15th of the month.*

# The Computer Link

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## **NNCUG Meeting Dates**

### ***NNCUG GENERAL MEETING***

***Third Saturday 9:30 a.m.***

***Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room***

### ***BEGINNERS SIG***

***Third Saturday 11:00 a.m. (after General Meeting)***

### ***GENEALOGY SIG***

***Third Saturday 11:00 am***

***Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury***

***[Members interested in leading and forming new SIG group, contact B.J. McMillan 580-8666]***

### ***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***

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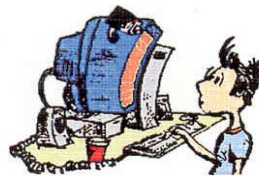
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**Coming Attractions**

**Membership—February 21st, 9:30 am-RW-C—Election, Photo Contest Winner, Computer Lab. Photo Sig, March 3rd, 9am**