

The

Computer Link

August 2009

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

NNCUG Officers

President
B.J. McMillan
804-580-8666

Vice President
Chris Christensen
438-4339

Secretary
Don Beard
438-4820

Treasurer
Jim Thompson
804-580-2538

Member-at-Large
Roger T. Fortin
804- 462-0431

The Computer Link
Tom Duke, Editor
804-435-0439

Website
Betty Lehman
<www.nncug.org>
Webteam
admin@nncug.org

E-mail address for all
NNCUG officers/staff:
admin@nncug.org

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

Ed shows how *Computer Link* is Published

NNCUG's *Computer Link* editor, Tom Duke (sometimes known as **Ed**), gave a PowerPoint presentation on how he writes, edits, assembles, prints and delivers this monthly newsletter at the July meeting at RW-C.

Ed showed the various steps taken to report the speaker's presentations for the **front page** and inserting the photo. Members were reminded of journalistic principles of "accuracy, terseness and accuracy" and that paragraph one needs to contain "who, what, when, where and why" to grab the reader's interest. He suggested, "compose in Word, copy and paste onto the **Publisher created template** and save as in a monthly dated link file."

Ed showed how to extract APCUG's "Push" articles from the monthly email and fit them into pages, columns and "continued ons." He located the Photoshop SIG **monthly winning photos** from the gallery and inserted them into convenient locations. He also showed

how to edit and insert the monthly meeting minutes and membership reports. Finally, he showed some compressing and resizing tricks.

He also showed how he always finalizes and turns a print over to a proof reader, preferably a school teacher, (in his case his wife) to perfect those errors not in the spell and grammar checker and clear up inaccuracies or confusing phraseology. The final Publisher pages are then converted to Adobe Acrobat for taking to the printers at Kinkos-FedEx in Newport-News.

Once completed, Ed calls the deliveryman, in NNCUG's case the Treasurer Jim Thompson, who addresses, stamps and staples and **mails** the monthly print issues.

Ed then emails the in color digital copies to the **Web page** and APCUG recipients and takes time off until the next meeting.

The whole process takes parts of two days a month and is a very rewarding and fun thing to do. **Ed.**



Tom Duke, Computer Link Editor
Photo by Chris Christensen

How Fast Is My Broadband Internet Connection? What Does Connection Speed Mean

Written by *Gabe Goldberg*,
Computers and Publishing, Inc.
Triplet (at) gabegold.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like to brag about connection speeds offered and speak glowingly about the wonderful "experience" their services offer. But how honest are their claims and how does connection speed affect what we do online?

The two most important words in any ISPs advertisement or service contract are "**up to**". As in, speeds promised are described as "up to X megabits per second".

(Megabits means "millions of bits" and "megabits per second" is often abbreviated Mbps. A bit is the basic unit of information or data, a "binary digit", a single unit that is either 0 or 1. Everything on the Internet and all information and software on your computer is composed of bits.)

But quoting "up to" speeds is like saying that an automobile whose speedometer dial includes the number 160 can travel "up to 160 MPH".

When shopping for a car or an ISP, **claims shouldn't be taken as facts** -- though some are safer to verify than others.

It's a pleasant surprise when ISPs deliver speeds faster than promised. That results from advancing technology and -- in areas fortunate enough to have multiple broadband ISPs -- competition. More common, though, is discovering that delivered service doesn't quite match the 160 MPH sort of promise ISPs make.

So to keep your ISP honest and detect problems, and for

If your speeds don't match your ISP's promises -- or they decline -- it's worth investigating.

bragging rights, it's useful to occasionally measure connection speeds. Internet connections are usually described with two speeds: download and upload. For nearly everyone, download speed matters most -- it's the rate at which data, Web sites, email, sound files, video streams, telephone calls, and services yet to be invented reach your computer. This greatly affects your Internet experience, determining whether your browser responds **quickly or sluggishly** to Web requests, how quickly email arrives, etc.

Upload speed measures how fast your computer sends data such as email or Web requests to the Internet. Unless you frequently send

large volumes of or huge email or other files -- or run a server of some sort -- this speed likely isn't critical.

A number of Web sites **measure connections speeds**. My favorite is [SpeedTest.net](http://speed-test.net); Googling "speed test" finds others. It opens showing you a couple of gauges, a small map of the world, and a large map of your region. Your local map will include many blue pyramids and one orange symbol -- that's the closest and recommended server for your test.

Click the orange pyramid to run download and upload speed tests. When they finish, click My Summary at top to see your download test results along with a number of comparisons -- your ISP's average speed and its speed in your state, your state's average, and similar numbers for the USA, North America, and globally. Click Upload Results for that set of speeds. SpeedTest.net reports speeds in kb/s -- that is, kilobits per second. One Mbps is 1000 kb/s, so an ISP's promised speed of 5 Mbps would show as 5000 kb/s.

As you run occasional speed tests, your **history of speeds** achieved lets you can track trends and detect problems. If your speeds don't match

Continued on Page 4

Free Software Helps Caregivers

Written by *Mike Morris*, Editor,
Front Range PC Users Group, Fort Collins, CO
kByte™ Newsletter, June 2009
<http://www.frpcug.org>
[twritertext\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:twritertext(at)gmail.com)

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

An article with the title "Caring for the Caregiver" appeared in the November/December 2007 issue of AARP magazine¹. Here is an extract from that article:

"A cascade of studies in recent years has shown that caregivers stand at particular risk for a host of mental and physical illnesses, many of which have roots in stress, exhaustion, and self-neglect—symptoms some medical professionals have begun calling caregiver syndrome. . . . According to a 2004 national survey by AARP and The National Alliance for Caregiving, nearly 23 million households are currently home to a caregiver, most often a woman who is taking care of someone 50 or older. Some 43 percent of these caregivers are over 50 themselves—13 percent are over 65—and they spend good chunks of their weeks **on a heady range of chores**, from medication management and bathing to feeding, clothing, and arranging health care services. . . . Unfortunately for many friends and family members of caregivers, it is difficult to know when to step in—or what to do...."

I recommend this article to all caregivers, and to friends and family members of caregivers. Yes, it is difficult for friends and family members of caregivers to know what to do. It can also be overwhelming for a caregiver to add another task—coordinating help from those friends and family members—to an already burdensome schedule. Both caregivers and those willing to help may find a scheduling solution with a web site called [Lotsa Helping Hands.com](http://LotsaHelpingHands.com). This web site allows a caregiver or family member to: "Create a free of charge, private, web-based com-

munity to organize family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues – a family's 'circles of community' — during times of need. . . ."
There are three primary templates:

1. Caregiving
2. Eldercare and Long Term Care
3. Military and Veterans Families

There are four additional templates:

1. Volunteering
2. Parenting
3. Schools
4. Religious Groups

These templates allow one person to coordinate the activities of others by identifying the needs and allowing volunteers to accept tasks. All of this activity takes place online, relieving the caregiver of the burden of many phone calls and separate schedules. For those familiar with Google Documents™, there is a slight similarity between the two. However, the Lotsa Helping Hands templates are **designed specifically for caregiving situations**:

"Each community includes an intuitive group calendar for scheduling tasks such as meals delivery and rides, a platform for securely sharing vital medical, financial, and legal information with designated family members, and customizable sections for posting photos, well wishes, blogs, journals, and messages.

Now, when someone asks 'what can I do to help?' the answer is 'give me your name and email address' – the system takes over **and allows people to sign up and start helping.**"

A web based service such as Lotsa Helping Hands is certain to generate questions about privacy and security. You will find answers to these questions in the "Terms of use" page of the web site. Included in the Terms are descriptions

Continued on Page 4

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.

Connection Speed *from Pg 1*

your ISP's promises -- or they decline -- it's worth investigating. Note that cable connection speeds often **vary more than those of DSL** or FiOS services, though cable broadband is usually faster than DSL. I'm pleased with my Cox cable service, usually delivering more than 20 Mbps download and about 2.5 Mbps upload.

www.nytimes.com/2009/02/12/technology/personaltech/12askk-002.html

Q. I am trying to decide which type of broadband service to use. I see that a DSL provider offers "up to 7.1 Mbps," while the cable company says it can do "up to 10 Mbps." What do these numbers mean?

A. The numbers refer to how fast you can download files over your Internet connection. Data transfer speeds are traditionally measured in bits per second. The "7.1

Mbps" figure means that the DSL provider says it can download a file to your computer at 7.1 megabits (or million bits) a second, and the cable company says it can move that file faster, at up to 10 megabits a second.

Higher speeds **save time when downloading** large files like movies, music, large photos and other hefty chunks of data because you receive it all quicker — in theory. In reality, the actual data transfer rates will probably be much slower than advertised.

Congestion on the Internet, the number of other people using the service at the same time, and even settings on your computer can affect how quickly your data actually moves.

Be aware that what goes down does not usually go up as fast. Most broadband services have faster speeds for snagging files than for sending them. For example, a DSL provider may offer 7.1

megabits a second for downloads, but only 768 kilobits a second for uploading files.

When shopping for a service, be sure to **find out the speeds for both directions** in the data transfer if you expect to be uploading large files on a regular basis.

If you are looking for opinions on specific service providers, the DSLReports site has reviews and information at www.dslreports.com. For more about the measurements and data transfer speeds, check out the SpeedGuide site's article on bits, bytes and bandwidth at snipurl.com/bcqtp.

This article first appeared on the Tiptet Web site, <www.tiptet.com> and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by non-profit 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 tiptet@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.

Tiptet's free newsletter provides weekly computer tips.

Free Caregiver Software *From page 4*
of the data security, data integrity and access (among other) protections.

[Note: The scheduling features are not dependent upon the use of private information. It is not necessary to include medical, financial or legal information on the web site—although that information is protected].

Lotsa Helping Hands has many non-profit partners, including the Alzheimer's Association, the Family Caregiver Alliance, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and many more. Check the Partners page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site for more information.

You can read what national media, such as Business Week, NY Times and others have to say about Lotsa Helping Hands by clicking on the links on the Media page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site.

I have not personally used this service, although there was a time, not so long ago, when I would have used it had I known about it. After reading the description of the service, and the "How It Works" section of the web site, I am convinced that the service is, indeed, very valuable and also secure. I recommend that caregivers try this service. There is at least the potential to reduce your levels of stress and exhaustion associated with your role of caregiver.

Uh oh -- I've Lost the Manual for a Gadget/Device

Written by *Gabe Goldberg*, Computers and Publishing, Inc.
Tiptlet (at) gabegold.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Unless you're a compulsive pack-rat -- and can prove it with multiple neatly organized file cabinets -- you'll eventually find that a gadget or appliance has separated from its operating instructions. And unless it's something brick-simple with just On/Off buttons, or you've memorized its every esoteric function, you'll be baffled and frustrated.

Even worse, many products now come with one-page pictures-only "**Quick Start**" instructions showing how to plug them in or insert batteries, turn them on, and not much else. Perhaps a real manual was delivered on a now-missing CD or a now-forgotten Web URL was given as a clue for help.

Don't despair! Many manufacturers offer full manuals on their Web sites, easily located and perused online or downloaded for printing or offline reference.

Start your quest by guessing or Googling the manufacturer's Web site. For example, Googling Oceanus -- my watch manufacturer -- finds the ``correct

Web site first out of 3,400,000 hits! Clicking Support and then Manual Information takes me to a selection page for watch models. Of course, Googling "**oceanus manuals**" would have taken me directly to the same selection page, and including the specific watch model would have further refined search results. And as a bonus, the manual

July Photo Winner "Face on a Plank" by Linda Boyatzies



downloaded from the Web site is much more convenient to read printed on 8.5"x11" paper than the nasty included-in-watch-box version with more than a hundred 3.5"x2" pages!

Similarly, instructions for operating my bargain-basement digital voice recorder are instantly found by Googling "olympus VN-1000se" as is the manual for my recently

acquired external hard drive, by simply Googling model number wd5000ml-00 (which also finds the Quick Install Guide, Product Specifications, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)).

Happily, manufacturers often put online manuals for **older products** sold before Web research was common. And don't give up if you can't find what you need -- click a Support or Contact Us link and politely ask about documentation availability. Material is often available by special request -- sometimes free, sometimes for minimal fee. Don't begrudge paying for a manual -- if it lets you continue using something, it's a bargain compared to buying a replacement!

This article first appeared on the Tiptlet Web site, <www.tiptlet.com> and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by non-profit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to Tiptlet and the author. It should be unchanged and this paragraph must be included. Please e-mail the author at tiptlet@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense. Tiptlet's free newsletter provides weekly computer tips.

July Meeting Minutes

The Northern Neck Computer Users Group met at the RWC auditorium 7/18/09. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Chris Christensen at 9:45 am.

There were 22 total attendees. The minutes of the June meeting were approved and the treasurers report was given. There was no raffle due to low attendance.

The Photo SIG and Genealogy SIG reports were given and there was a short Q&A session.

The speaker was Tom Duke, editor of the club's newsletter. He described and illustrated the preparation of the monthly *Computerlink*. The program provided an overview of details involved in producing the newsletter.

Don Beard, Secretary

Membership Report - August 2009

RENEW August—David Brashears, George Cadmus, Carol Hammer, Jim Sapione, Blanche Stevens, Loreta Stover, Vicki White

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.

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.raptapp.homestead.com**



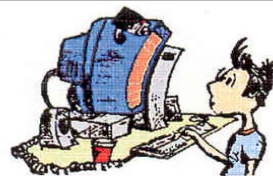
GGCWEB.COM LLC.

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



GeekLab

**Custom Computers and
On-Site PC Services
*We Make House Calls!***

**(804) 462-3462 Free
Estimates**

Upgrades and Repairs
Internal Hardware Cleaning
Virus & Spyware Removal
Windows Re-Installations
Software Lessons

chris@emxry.com

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

Coming Attractions

**Membership—August 15th, 9:30 am, RW-C. Gabe Goldberg
Photo SIG—September 1st, 9 am—Library**