

The

Computer Link

May 2012

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

NNCUG Officers

President
Brian Riley
804-436-2252

Vice President
Rob Mink
804-436-5615

Secretary
Anne Moss
804-438-5280

Treasurer
George Cadmus
804-435-6328

Member-at-Large
Chris Christensen
804-438-4339

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

Website
Dave Mower
<dmower@
northernneck.com>

E-mail address for all
NNCUG officers/staff:
geocadjr@verizon.net

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for **NEXT ISSUE**,
One week after meeting

WHERE WE'VE BEEN, AND WHERE WE'RE GOING!

Brian Riley, our President, was the featured speaker at the April NNCUG Membership Meeting. Brian gave a fascinating **overview of the development of personal computing and some possibilities of where it will go**. He also gave brief comments on his experience with a beta of the forthcoming **Windows 8 operating system** from Microsoft. Finally, Brian talked with the audience about **what members would like to see in the NNCUG for the coming year**.



Brian Riley

Photo by: Alan Christensen

Brian started his presentation by describing the Cyber 205 computer that had 32 MB of RAM, 7.2 Gig of disk space and cost \$3.7 million. It needed Freon cooling and towers that were sold separately. If one had a room the size of a football, this computer could be fit in. He contrasted this with a forthcom-

ing I-phone that will run at 2100 MHz with a Quad Core Processor, will be battery powered, have 512 MB of RAM, and 32 Gig disk space. It will fit in your hand with a bit of space left over! Quite an evolution that included the first generally accepted personal computer oriented to business from IBM approximately 30 to 40 years ago!

Brian asked the very reasonable question of **“So, what do we need all that extra stuff for?”** in personal com-

puters. This led the presentation into the increasingly demanding graphics from four color CGA graphics to current standards such as the 64 million color Super XGA graphics with its attendant demands on memory or disk space and the demands it placed on processors. Then there is the develop-

ment of operating systems from a single floppy disk (DOS 3.3) to the preview version of Windows 8 that would take around 2700 floppies (if one wanted to source that many).

Are there any limits? Yes. Brian noted that heat created a limit of around 3 GHz for air-cooled CPUs. There is a limit to how small one can make the transistors in the CPU. He noted that CPUs process instructions one at a time – but very quickly. These limitations can be overcome through multi-core processors that allow multitasking and multiprocessing. This explains why we can no longer use an operating system that will fit on a floppy disk.

As the hardware and operating systems have evolved, so have the **techniques used in programming** that evolved from compiled code, through interpreted code to script code.

Along with the evolution noted above, **computing environments** have developed from the dumb terminal/mainframe through the stand-alone personal computer, client server to cloud based computing, and to special purpose devices such as the currently hot item – tablet computers.

Brian then presented a **comparison of laptop computers to the latest development that has found favor – the tablet**. If one remembers the first laptop, the suit case size Osborne, progress to laptops and finally tablets has been amazing! He noted that each went through an “early adapter” phase that provided limited functionality for the intended audience. (Remember the larger than brick size and “bag” cell phones?)

In comparing current laptops to tablets, Brian noted that the latter are in the **early adapter phase**. At this stage, the touch oriented tablet is OK for e-mail, checking ones stock portfolio, and information gathering. Due to its touch operating orientation, there is no real gain when compared to using a laptop. **The key drawback is input to the**

tablet – keyboards are not that practical. Brian thinks that in 2 to 3 years, when one can talk to a tablet and get it to do something, it will be a more practical and useful device. This led to a brief discussion of the forthcoming Microsoft Windows 8 operating system.

Brian completed his presentation of the history of personal computing with a brief **demonstration of the user interface of the forthcoming Windows 8 operating system**. He thinks that the radically redesigned desktop with its orientation to a touch screen style will not be particularly good for use on a laptop. But he is not sure how it will play out. He noted that it does have nice graphics and will run normal products such as Office. Still, it does not appear to be intuitive for users. For example, how does one turn off the operating system? Well, you have to hover your mouse on the extreme right side of the screen where an icon for settings comes into view and then you can shut down.

Brian and members of the audience then discussed possible **topics for speakers at future meetings**. Suggested topics include: human movements communicated to computer screens; loading printed matter into the Kindle tablet; remote controls; a gadget session or what’s new in October (in time for holiday shopping); converting old records and film movies to CDs or DVDs; and an update how medical records are now being created and updated. It was **also suggested that the NNCUG might establish a “Tablet SIG”** that would meet once a quarter (or more often) to discuss applications and other topics unique to the increasingly popular tablet computer.

Brian, we all appreciated your wide-ranging presentation. It certainly brought back memories of the triumphs and tribulations of getting to know and use these computing devices!

Ed.

April Photo SIG

Joe Moeller shared the photo of his “**Virtual Family**” at the April Photo SIG meeting.



This is a composite of three individual photos that he combined in a photo editing program. It was not made using a multi-exposure photo technique that one could use in the “old film days”. **Ed.**

The Trouble with Terabytes

By Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group, NY
www.iconpcug.org
 Editor (at) iconpcug.org

Technological advances, different materials and cost efficient manufacturing have made it possible for computers to leap from standard 20 GB hard drives of a decade ago and the 200+ GB drives of yesterday to breaking through the gigabyte ceiling affordably in a relatively short period of time. Now having a 1 terabyte drive is passé as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.

No, I will NOT wax poetic about my personal opinion of larger drives, including the “Scarlet O’Hara” mindset of maintenance, indiscriminate saving of files and the time

for security scans. (For that you can read “*The Lurking Dangers of Larger Hard Drives*” in the June, 2010 issue of **The ICON Graphic**.) Instead, you will need to consider whether your current computer actually knows what to do with all that storage space.

Not so long ago almost all computer operating systems used the partitioning scheme called the “Master Boot Record” (MBR). Unfortunately, the computer will not be able to recognize anything over 2.2 TB. So that larger drive can be installed, but the additional storage space will be useless. The MBR scheme is common on all Windows operating systems through Windows XP, as well as other operating systems from that time period. Windows Vista and the Mac OS X Leopard ushered in the new GUID partition table (GPT) which allows them to recognize the larger drives. Windows 7 and Vista users can use the larger drives as SECONDARY drive without worrying about whether it is a 32 bit or 64 bit version. But for anything larger than a 2 TB drive to be used as the PRIMARY drive, the computer MUST be running the 64 bit version of Windows 7 or Vista.

The systems boot-up firmware must be checked as well. There are many computers using a newer operating system and the GPT partition system, but still using the BIOS firmware. This will need to be updated to the new UEFI firmware, which has become the new industry standard. Check with the terabyte drive manufacturer to see if they offer a firmware update. Of course that updated firmware is useless if the motherboard cannot run the firmware, so again, check with the manufacturer’s specifications. Some will work, but you must use a different connection, such as the PCI-Express card slot.

Most newly manufactured computers ARE equipped with 64 bit operating systems, the GPT partition system AND UEFI boot-up firmware. So if you are thinking about running amok in terabyte land, these are some things to know about before upgrading, or buying that new computer. Remember **new** just means that it has not been used by anyone – it does not necessarily mean that it has the latest technology.

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Tablet or Laptop, a Popular Question...and More App Reviews

By Gregory West, APCUG Advisor, Region 6 & International
VP of Sarnia Computer Users' Group (scug.ca)
Can be contacted at: gwest@apcug.org

Unless you are a "hard core" computer gamer, **you can now officially say goodbye to the laptop.**

The day of computer frustration is coming to an end. The answer to pulling your hair out as you are trying to figure out why the laptop is so hard to use is called: "touch pads".

Recently, I was on a technology cruise out of Miami, where 400 plus geeks road the seas and clicked on computers in various seminars. Wait, that's not correct. It wasn't computers these everyday people were using. No, it was touch screen devices. Mostly iPads I must admit. This too is strange as the group was 99.9% Windows users. The average age in the 400 plus crowd was, shall I say, more than 50+. Most of them said they cannot believe the difference and ease when they switched from a laptop or desktop to a tablet.

Most people on the tech cruise, who recently bought a tablet and still owned a laptop/desktop computer, said that they "hardly ever use their computer anymore." The hot topic on the ship was the app. People were constantly sharing newfound apps for their tablets.

So what makes these tablets so popular?

Price, ease of use, two click downloads for software, portability, and low price is enticing laptop/desktop are just a few of the factors enticing people to switch. Here are some tips when shopping for a tablet:

Test drive several. Ask friends who own them what they suggest. Do online searches for reviews.

Decide what exactly you are going to use it for then decide on the size. I wouldn't worry too much about the hard drive size as most of what we do on computer is heading to the cloud and soon you won't need software programs for your devices.

Make sure the tablet of choice has a USB slot for thumb drives, cameras, and other such devices. ITworld.com suggests "Decide on the operating system. The three main choices these days are iOS, Android or Blackberry Tablet OS. Do a bit of research on all three and pick the one that will work

the best for you."

One final word...Most people will tell you once they bought tablets their other computers became lonely. Just ask anyone who owns a tablet and they'll tell you they "hardly use" their computers anymore because the tablet is "so much easier to use and less hassle".

Forester.com researchers predict "Tablets will cannibalize netbooks and outsell them starting in 2012. In 2015, 23% of all PCs sold to consumers in the US will be tablets."

Happy hunting.

App Reviews..."AppZilla 2" won the App of the year award.

I broke down and bought an app for my iPhone, AppZilla 2. Ninety-nine cents is a fair price to pay for an app that houses 120 apps with just one click. Apple reports this app "surpasses 2,000,000 downloads!" **AppZilla 2 works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.** Sorry droid users!

With 120 apps in one app it will take some time to test drive them all. Some are kinda corny but still fun. As a Google user of Docs, mail and much more, I like the way this app has corralled all the Google products for ease of use. They call this the "utility" app and rightfully so as there are levels, app for flashlight mode on your phone, path finder so you never get lost, night vision, password keeper, parking meter reminder with alarm, police scanner for many cities, and many more I haven't tried but sure will. I give this app a 10+.

Gregory can be reached at: gregory@alternatcloud.com

Visit the free website for 50+ learning computers: <http://alternatcloud.com>
Free Basic Computer Help Workshops first Monday of every month 9:30 to noon: Grace United Church - Sarnia, Ontario - 519-542-1203

NNCUG Membership Meeting

The Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 19 at the RWC Auditorium.

Plans for the speaker are still being determined.

Coffee and donuts 9:30 a.m., and the meeting starts at 10:00. Visitors welcome!

Ed.

April 21 Meeting Notes

next meeting. **See below!**

TREASURERS REPORT: 100 members.
Treasury Balance: \$3,904.47

Newly elected NNCUG **President Brian Riley conducted the meeting.**

SIG REPORTS:

PHOTOGRAPHY: Jim Sapione reminded us that the group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the Lancaster County library in Kilmarnock. Anyone with an interest in photography regardless of skill level is invited. The group uses Photoshop Elements 7. If you have a laptop, bring it and join in an interactive learning experience. An exercise is usually distributed prior to the meeting for members to work with if so desired. Results are shared at the meeting.

GENEALOGY: There was no report. The Genealogy SIG meets in odd numbered months at 1:00 p.m. in the large RWC meeting room. May 15 is the

SPEAKER: **President Brian Riley was the featured speaker** at the April meeting. He gave a very interesting presentation on where computing had been, and his views on selected trends in the future. Brian also gave a brief presentation on the Windows 8 beta. Finally, he solicited the views of the audience on where what members wanted to hear about over the next year in the NNCUG.

RAFFLE WINNERS: **Bruce Mc Millan** - Two 8 GB flash drives and a Case Logic USB case; **George Cadmus** - Panimage 7" Digital Photo Frame; and **Chris Christensen** - GE Portable USB Sound Bar.

Ed.

Genealogy SIG Meeting

The May Genealogy SIG meeting will feature a video presentation by Leland K. Meitzler on how to find female ancestors. Women are frequently the greatest challenge to genealogists as their names changed and frequently they did not inherit where Deed records would be helpful in research. **Mr.**

Meitzler currently operates Family roots Publishing Company and writes daily at GenealogyBlog.com. **(This meeting will be in lieu of a field trip in May.)**

The **meeting** will be held on **TUESDAY, May 15** at 1:00 p.m., Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury, Irvington.

Note the change from the normally scheduled date of May 10 to MAY 15. THIS IS ONLY A ONE TIME CHANGE IN DATE.

Ann Thompson

Membership Report - April 2012

Welcome - None

**RENEW May 2012 - Susan Barrick, Russell Buxton
Tom Duke, Jean Ehlman, Robert Headley**

**RENEW April 2012 - Dave Alberts, Mal Brown
Roger Fortin, Linda McConahey, Marianne Miller**

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, 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***



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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
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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 - To be Announced; May 19, 10:00 am
Genealogy - Finding Female Ancestors - L. Meitzler; May 15
Photo SIG - May 8, 09:30 am, Lancaster Community Library*