THE PRINTER

Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings everyone!

We continue to have enjoyable meetings and no one's been complaining about the meeting topics. But we desperately need your input. And more to the point, we need your help in volunteering to demonstrate topics.

There is a lot of talent in our merry little group and I'm sure there are many of you than can make short presentations. I certainly would like to see a presentation on basic video editing and I'm sure there's someone in the group who's doing it right now. These presentations don't need to be an hour, or even half an hour long, but short 10-15 minute presentations on your favorite software, hardware, websites (if we can access them at the school), podcasts, etc. We really do need your help.

March 9th Meeting – Streaming video to your devices (Netflix and similar)

That Blu-Ray player that you own is probably the last optical drive you will buy. Most video content from the point forward will probably be streaming from the Internet. In March, this topic will be discussed and demonstrated.

Since we like to know the background on these technologies, we will also discuss the technology behind how streaming services work. It's a little complex, but I hope to make it as smooth as possible. There is an article in this issue of *The Printer* to discuss this topic as well.

April 13th Meeting – Backup solutions

A follow on to our *"System Components"* series will be the use of backup solutions for your data. We will discuss external storage and various off-site solutions. My primary recommendation is that people choose a service such as Carbonite and backup their data off-site. It is simply too easy to lose data stored in your home of business.

May 11th Meeting – Transfer your VHS video to DVD

This topic has come up on several occasions, but no one was actually making the transfers. Kathy Walker will demonstrate how she transfers her old VHS video to DVD using her PC. More details coming.

June 1st Meeting *– System Components: Video Graphics cards/GPU

In our continuous series on various systems components, we will discuss the video card. This component will make a lot of difference in the performance of your PC going forward. Windows 7 and future operating systems will take advantage of the Graphical Processing Unit (GPU) for overall system throughput. Individual programs are also taking advantage of the GPU as well. These programs include the next versions of web browsers (Internet Explorer 9 and FireFox 4) to display web video, Adobe products, and some productivity software as well. The GPU is the easiest way to increase system performance.

I hope to see you at the upcoming meetings!

Michael

Nasty virus - cont'd

I guess it's obvious, but a strong anti-virus program running on your machine is essential. BUT – this is important – make sure you look at the scheduling part of it and make sure it will automatically download new definitions and also run a full system scan at a time of day that the machine will most likely be turned on. Same for Windows Updates. Make certain that all important updates are installed as soon as they are available.

Password protect your main administrative account (this is the one that comes first with the computer) and bury the password paper in the back yard and leave the location with your attorney. Better yet, Win 7 allows you to create a flash drive that will unlock the computer. Hide it under some rubber fake dog poop someplace.

THEN: Create a non-administrative account for yourself – a regular non-privileged account, and a separate one – or one for each kid. A regular account cannot install software. But most importantly, SOFTWARE that is run under this account can't install software. Ah HA!

Then one more step. Set the screensavers to require a sign-in on wake-up, and ALWAYS log off when you leave the computer. That's especially essential when leaving the administrative account.

Skills: There are a few things that would be very helpful to learn. The big one is navigating the computer file system using Windows Explorer. Find out how your files are organized, and more importantly, how to change what files you can view. That's in Windows Explorer, Tools, Folder Options, View tab. Second Important Skill – learn to use the Add, Remove Programs. That's "Programs and Features" in Vista and Win 7. When you find an installed program that you are not using (say, anything with the word Apple or toolbar), just uninstall it, and see how it goes.

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How Does Streaming Video Work?

by
J. Edward Casteele
eHow Contributor

The Basics of Streaming Video

As with most other forms of Internet (http://www.ehow.com/internet/) communications, streaming video is the result of sending a video across an Internet communication in small packets. The video is shown at approximately the same rate as the packets arrive, whereas if you download a video, all of the packets must be received before the video can be shown in its entirety. When the packets arrive faster than the video is being shown, a buffer is created so that the video will be able to play smoothly in its entirety. Should the packets be arriving slower than the video is playing, lag will occur and the video will pause until a sufficient buffer can be created.

Pseudo-Streaming via HTTP

HTTP is one of the most common forms of video streaming, even though the HTTP protocol was designed to transfer web pages and static images instead of video. Streaming video via HTTP works by constantly downloading the data from the video stream, building up enough of a buffer to enable the video to play. This is not considered to be true streaming video since the video isn't being played directly from the server that hosts the video but is instead being stored in a temporary file on the viewer's computer (http://www.ehow.com/computers/) and being played from there.

Full Streaming of Video Feeds

True video streaming uses a different protocol known as RTSP, or the Real Time Streaming Protocol. RTSP streaming uses specialized software on the server to regulate the transfer of the video, adjusting it to the speed that it is being watched and allowing viewers to skip ahead and go back to previous portions of the video without having to download the skipped portions as well.

Because the video feed is being watched directly from the server, the data isn't being stored on the viewer's computer; this can be used as an anti-piracy measure for video producers who don't want their videos distributed by others. RTSP servers are not as common as HTTP servers because of their cost, though the quality of the streaming video may be superior and will generally experience less lag.

How Streaming Video & Audio Work
©2007 HowStuffWorks

Basic Streaming Process

Web Server

① A user visits a Web page hosted on a Web server and finds a file he'd like to see or hear.

② The Web server sends a message to a streaming media server, requesting the specific file.

Media Server

Client

③ The streaming server streams the file to the user's computer, bypassing the Web server.

④ The client software on the user's computer decodes and plays the file.

Chesapeake PC Users Group

What a Nasty Virus Can Do to Your Computer

by
Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PCUG, Florida
November 2010 issue, Bits of Blue
www.tpcug.org

I recently was asked to remove a virus from a friend/client's notebook. For all intents and purposes, it rendered the computer completely in-operative. The virus was in a virus category of "Rogue antivirus software." There are many of them out there for the unwary to catch, and this one, called "ThinkPoint," even has the Windows flag on it to further fool you into thinking it is legitimate. The only option you can see is "Safe Startup," and that takes you to a virus scanner and a way to purchase the product. If you close it out, it shows you a blank desktop, no icons, no menus. You can turn the machine off, that's about it. Turn it back on, same situation. I did figure out a way to kill it through the Task Manager's Run command, and then run the desktop. I also found some things written up on the Internet to do something similar, but no help in removing it. I did remove it using some very clever, obscure skills, several virus scanners, then finding and removing twenty or so copies of it. But the computer really didn't work well enough to use. What I found surprised me, and this is what the article is about and what you can do.

Here's a list of what I found. Some things are by deduction and may not be 100% accurate. But I am 100% certain that these problems existed. All of the things fit into a strategy that prevents you from fixing the computer.

1. The worst thing: The computer will not boot into safe mode. It blue screens every time. I'm speculating that ThinkPoint either corrupted an existing driver or put a new one in that loads and then fails. The way to fix this is to do a system repair or a complete reformat and installation. I did not want to impose that cost on my customer, and she agreed (it's not a primary computer, and it's rather old). So I left it that way.

2. All the system restore points were un-usable. Refused to restore to any point.

3. To run most anything, an official-looking popup would ask to confirm the logon user and give a box for an alternative user account that did not work. This is to make sure that everything you try is run under the current user account which has been modified to prevent circumventing the virus. What you want to run is Explorer. exe giving you your desktop, and every effort is made to prevent you from doing this.

4. Most – perhaps all – items in Control panel will not run. It gave a warning that the administrator account has restricted its use. I did manage to get into the power configuration, but it would not accept any change. The computer would go into sleep mode after about 20 minutes, keeping me from running a full system scan from any antivirus software unless I sat there and wiggled the mouse occasionally for four hours.

5. The Internet articles say that even if you purchase the software to fix a bogus virus, ThinkPoint stays on the computer. The uninstall just errors out.

6. The Internet articles say that it installs other viruses, and I did find a half dozen other viruses, mostly downloaders.

7. It leaves about 20 copies of itself under various random names, and places items in the registry to run each of them. So removing the active virus is just the beginning. I also found a couple of viruses

4

Nasty virus - cont'd

in the System Restore files.

8. It apparently makes changes to the current user account profile that look like group policy changes, even though this was Windows XP Home, which doesn't have group policy capability.

9. Only after all the bad software is cleared from the machine can you then get rid of the modified account by creating a new administrative account, copying all of the user files from the old to the new – except for the profile files, then deleting the old account after locating the email files.

Isn't this scary? It is to me, and I (95%) fixed this one with a lot of work. The idea of having to fix my own machine after something like this gives me nightmares.

What you can do to prevent this: A sizable number of virus infections now are rogue anti-virus'. There's an understandable reason for this. It creates revenue. Old-fashioned viruses are malicious, but have no revenue-producing strategy. In other words, it's now about money. Most all viruses are sent to you via web pages, and most of those are porn sites, either designed that way or hacked from outside. Porn sites are visited so often, they are a very good candidate for this kind of thing. Also, presumably the porn site owners don't have the skill to remove sophisticated hacks. But most any web site is vulnerable. In any case, you must select something on the site – click on it – to give the browser a chance to violate security rules.

The next common way to get a virus is with downloads. And that means just about any download or file transfer. So you have to get any and all files from reputable sites like iTunes or Downloads.com, Amazon etc., which have the resources to check their own content.

But that leaves any and all file-sharing sites absolutely and definitely off the list. So if you're downloading songs for free, you're in trouble. Any file-sharing site's software must be uninstalled from your computer.

And that also goes for any peer-to-peer gaming sites, LimeWire, Kazaa, and any and all IM programs that allow peer-to-peer file exchanges.

And while we're at it, remove – uninstall – anything that says "Toolbar." Right now. Want to know why toolbars are free? Because they're a conduit for pushing advertising to you; and they're easily exploited. Besides you don't need them. They want you to believe you do, of course! But the browser itself and a couple of favorites will do anything a toolbar will do.

An alternative is giving up gaming and IM and to start purchasing songs. So if you have kids who will just die without peer-to-peer gaming or IM and stealing songs, the answer is to live with it with some intelligent prevention.

First, if at all possible, put the kids (and maybe grandpa) on a Windows 7 machine. I f you have some internal networking and file sharing, Windows 7 Pro is better because it will back up to a network drive. But so will Acronis Home, or 2010 or 2011, running under Win 7 Home Premium.

Make sure you have a full system backup, and replace it monthly. Use Windows 7 Backup or Acronis. Believe me, restoring the entire system hard drive is way, way better than any alternative that I can think of. Look at what I had to do with ThinkPoint. Want to try it?

A Happier, Longer Life? Volunteer!

by
Sr. Dorothy Robinson, Editor,
Olympia Microcomputer Users Group, WA
December 2010 OMUG News
www.olymug.org / newsletter (at) olymug.org

Although there may be some situations where volunteering would not necessarily get you a longer, happier life (any veteran could fill you in on that), there are now studies showing that people who volunteer at least two hours a week do in fact receive health benefits from volunteering.

According to an article by Adam Voiland at http://health.usnews.com a 2007 report which drew on the results of 30 studies said volunteering can indeed be good for your health. Voiland says the report indicates that "people who volunteer enjoy longer lives, higher functional ability, and lower rates of depression and heart disease."

Volunteering keeps a person active and interested, as well as helping stay connected with other people.

Voiland quoted Steven Post, director of a research group at Case Western Reserve University that focuses on the "scientific study of altruism, compassion, and service," as saying, "The helping impulse is very fundamental. When it is locked off we do not flourish."

If we look around, there are friends, neighbors, and family who could use a helping hand now and then. There are also nonprofit organizations whose mission is to help people.

You may be belong to one. In fact, if you're reading this newsletter, chances are you belong to The Olympia Microcomputer Users Group.

Any group needs leadership, and OMUG is no exception. All our officers and key members are volunteers, and if you talk to any of them, my guess is that you'll find they enjoy taking an active part in our computer users group, keeping it alive to fulfill its mission.

OMUG's purpose, according to our Bylaws, "shall be to provide a non-profit, educational, self-help organization for personal computer users; to cultivate cooperative relationships among computer users in our community; and to promote knowledgeable use of personal computer hardware and software."

Think about why you joined OMUG, and why you keep renewing your membership each year. Maybe you have computer expertise to offer and you enjoy helping others. Maybe you don't know a lot about computers and are looking for help. Whatever your reason, computer expertise, or lack of it, is irrelevant to participating in leadership of our group. People with many different lives, leisure and work experiences have served as OMUG officers. You can, too.
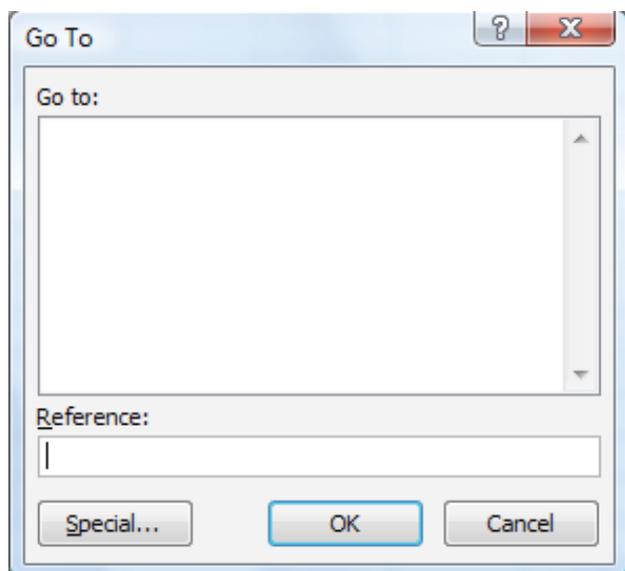

Chesapeake PC Users Group

More Excel and Word Tips More Excel and Word Tips from

Excel - Displaying a Hidden First Column

Excel makes it easy to hide and unhide columns. What isn't so easy is displaying a hidden column if that column is the left-most column in the worksheet. For instance, if you hide column A, Excel will dutifully follow out your instructions. If you later want to unhide column A, the solution isn't so obvious.

To unhide the left-most columns of a worksheet when they are hidden, follow these steps:

1. Press **F5**. Excel displays the Go To dialog box.

The Go To dialog box.

2. In the Reference field at the bottom of the dialog box, enter A1.

3. Click on OK. Cell A1 is now selected, even though you cannot see it on the screen.

4. Unhide the column. (In Excel 2007 or Excel 2010, display the Home tab of the ribbon and click Format | Hide & Unhide | Unhide Columns. In older versions of Excel choose Format | Column | Unhide.)

Another way to display the first column is to click on the header for column B, and then drag the mouse to the left. If you release the mouse button when the pointer is over the gray block that marks the intersection of the row and column headers (the blank gray block just above the row headers), then column B and everything to its left, including the hidden column A, are selected. You can then unhide the column.

A third method is even niftier, provided you have a good eye and a steady mouse pointer. If you move your mouse pointer into the column header area, and then slowly move it to the left, you notice that it turns into a double-headed arrow with a blank spot in the middle as you position the pointer over the small area immediately to the left of the column B header. This double-headed arrow is a bit difficult to describe; it looks most closely like the double-headed arrow that appears when you position the pointer over the dividing line between column headers. It is different, however, because instead of a black line dividing the double arrows, there are two black lines with a gap between them.

When your mouse pointer changes to this special double-headed arrow, all you have to do is right-click and choose Unhide. Your previously missing column A magically reappears.

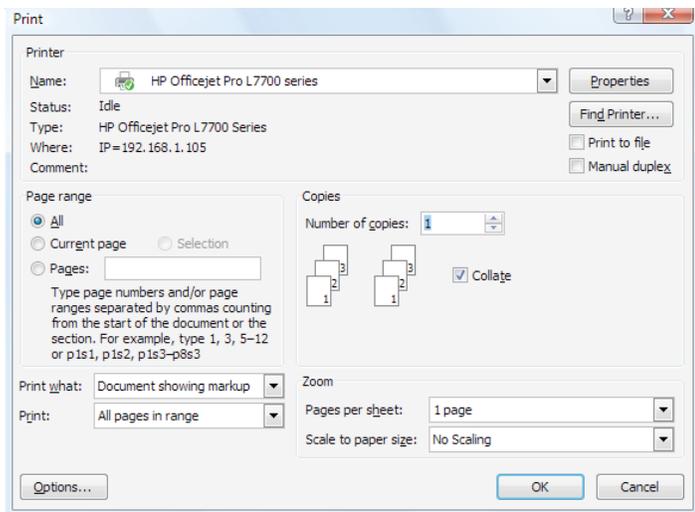## Word - Printing Odd or Even Pages

There may be many times that you need to print either odd or even pages in a print job. For instance, you may want to put your pages through the printer twice so you can print on both sides. This is easy to do in Word by following these steps:

1. Press **CTRL+P**. Word displays the Print dialog box.

More Excel and Word Tips - cont'd

The Print dialog box.

2. Adjust the printing settings as desired.

3. Using the Print drop-down list at the bottom of the dialog box, choose either Odd Pages or Even Pages, as desired. (Make sure you use the Print drop-down list, not the Print What drop-down list.)

4. Click on OK. Your document is printed.

The above steps work great in any version of Word up through Word 2007. If you are using Word 2010, then the Print dialog box was done away with. You should follow these steps, instead:

1. Press **Ctrl+P**. Word displays the File tab of the ribbon, with printing options visible in the tab.

2. Adjust the printing settings as desired.

3. Using the first drop-down list under the Settings heading, choose Only Print Odd Pages or Only Print Even Pages, as desired.

4. Click on Print. Your document is printed.

Geez - Gmail

by
Abby Stokes, Author, Is This Thing On?
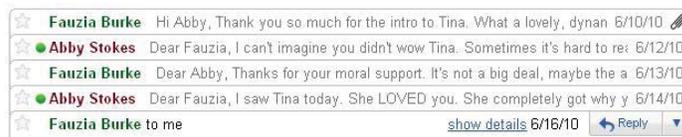*www.abbyandme.com*
abbystokes (at) yahoo.com

When I'm asked what free web-based e-mail I recommend it is **NOT** Gmail <www.gmail.google.com/> I know, I know, your kids and grand kids are all over you to use Gmail instead of AOL. I agree that AOL is inconsistent and not as compatible with many handheld devices, but Gmail's design is not particularly "user-friendly" (a misnomer when referring to anything computer). I would suggest Yahoo <https://login.yahoo.com/> over Gmail, but I understand that your family has more influence over your decisions that I do.

So, if you're going to take the plunge and use Gmail, let's make it as "friendly" as we can by customizing it to meet your needs.

My first criticism is that e-mails stack on top of one another:

For a newbie what you see above can be conceptually confusing and, for those that have dexterity issues, this format is difficult to manipulate - it requires very good aim.

I hear you daughter snapping back that one could click on **Expand All** in the right sidebar.

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Gmail - cont'd

The problem with this option is that Google then presents the oldest e-mail on top and the most recent must be scrolled down to - not an optimal choice for someone just learning to scroll or who has memory issues. Rather than debate the good, bad, and ugly of Gmail, let me offer you a way to reformat the Inbox. This stacking is referred to as "conversation view."

To turn conversation view off:
1) Click on **Settings** (top right)
2) Scroll down until you see **Conversation View:**
3) Click in the circle (aka radio dial) to the left of **Conversation view off**
4) **MOST IMPORTANT** - Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on **Save Changes**

I am asked regularly "How can I change the font to be larger on all of my outgoing e-mails?" This is a courtesy to the reader that most older users are more apt to opt for. It is an elusive option with Gmail, but it does exist.

To enable change font style:
1) Click **Settings** (top right)
2) Click the **Labs** tab (far right)

3) Scroll down to **Default Text Styling**
4) Click in the circle to the left of **Enable**
5) **MOST IMPORTANT** - Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on **Save Changes**

While you're visiting Settings or the Lab tab, take a look around and see what else you might want to customize. Make a note of the original setting - in case you don't like the change you've made, you can revert back to what it was. For those teaching Gmail to an new user, be sure to really hit home that the arrow to the right of

Reply is where the most common actions will be hidden - Forward, Print, Reply All, etc. Why did Gmail choose to hide these features? Mine is not to wonder why. Mine is just to show you how.

You're capable of learning anything - well-designed or not. Just keep in mind when you think the problem is you, it's more likely a thoughtless design choice.

Take a deep breath and rise above it!

Image Resizer

by
Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, Florida
December 2010 issue, CRUG newsletter
www.crug.com   newsletter (at) crug.com

If you upgraded from Windows XP to Vista or Windows 7 you may miss the XP Powertoy Image Resizer. It was great when you needed to quickly create different size images of a photo. Maybe you need a small image to email or a special size for desktop wallpaper. There are many reasons to create of a particular size image. Images can be resized in a photo editor. My choice is Corel Paint Shop Pro Photo. I use it to edit and size my digital photos. But then if I want a special size edited photo it is quicker to use Image Resizer. Download from imageresizer.codeplex.com.
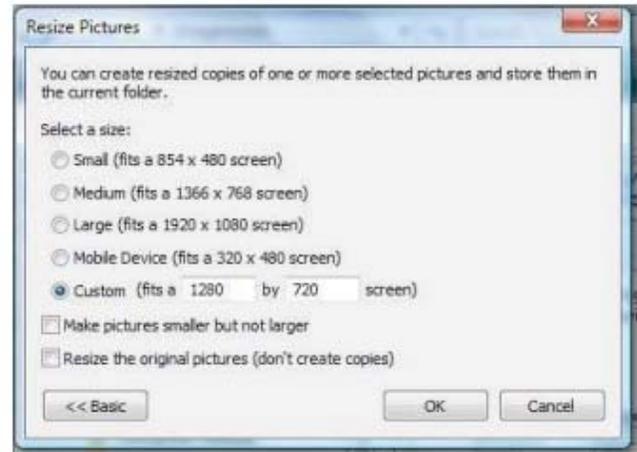
Image Resizer is a clone of the Image Resizer Powertoy for Windows XP. To use Image Resizer locate the photo or photos in Windows Explorer.
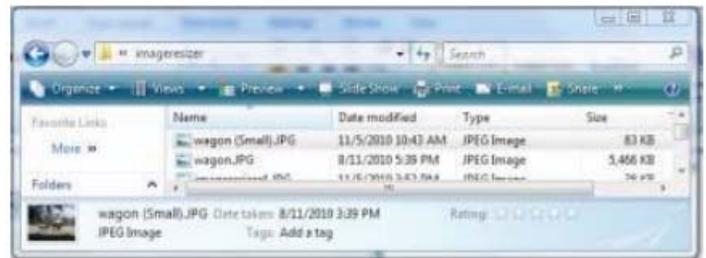
Image Resizer - cont'd

Select the photos to resize and then right click on the selection.

In the resize Pictures dialog box select from the predefined sizes. To specify a custom size click the Advanced button. The advanced area also contains two other selections. Toggle them on or off. I recommend leaving the Resize the original pictures unchecked. You don't want to inadvertently resize a large image to 854 x 480.

The new images are saved indicating a size.

Dick's Clicks - cont'd

And yet—and yet—I know that many among us, like Sam, are living happy and rich, productive lives at a more leisurely pace, without the comfort of a personal computer. Recently an AP story told of a NY mother who "unplugged" her kids for six months, with clearly beneficial effects on grades and use of spare time. Kinda like the way we all were three or four decades ago. I imagine them having coffee with friends, hanging out at the library, reading books, writing hand-written letters, enjoying family phone calls, pursuing all sorts of personal hobbies, blissfully unaware of all the richness of living in a computer-dominated world. And they don't send $600/year to an ISP. Should I pity them in their technical austerity? Or should they pity me, for embracing the Church of Google?

Quotes of the month:
"Computers make it easier to do a lot of things, but most of the things they make it easier to do don't need to be done."
Andy Rooney

Dick's Clicks

by
Dick Ramette, President, Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ
February 2011 issue, Green Bytes
http://ccgv.apcug.org   Rwramette (at) mindspring.com

"Sam" likes being technophobic. He grew up happily without PCs, cell phones, and credit cards, and is amused by those who flaunt their myriad electronic devices. He quotes Clifford Stoll: "Why is it drug addicts and computer aficionados are both called users?" But, in reality, there is no such thing as a "nonuser," because of how computers permeate most aspects of modern society.

Sam's not impressed with how stores use computers to scan price codes, manage inventories, and arrange for shipping. He's uninformed about how modern medicine is highly digitized, from storing personal records to advanced diagnostic tools, as are all bank accounts. newspapers, magazine subscriptions, telephones and public library accounts. Travel relies on the computers of hotels, restaurants, cruise ships and airlines, and all newer cars are governed by built-in computers. The USPS and the phone system could not function well without computers, nor could law enforcement and fire fighters. Even the aerobics machines in GVR fitness rooms are computerized.

At the other extreme from Sam are the true technophiles, like the few elites in CCGV, whose computer expertise dwarfs that of the typical user. Nothing will do except the latest version of hardware and software. Some golfers are even using GPS devices to plot strategy during a round.

I'm more in the common mainstream, I guess. My two computers do enrich my life on a daily basis. My son in Wisconsin sent me an email with a video of wild turkeys near his property, and I was able to inform him, thanks to Google, that a group of turkeys is called a gang, a posse, or a rafter. See: http://www.thealmightyguru.com/Pointless/AnimalGroups.html.

I enjoy the Astronomy Picture of the Day, my favorite comics (those not included in the AZ Star, like Judge Parker), opinions on NYTimes and Huffington Post, and I sample the thousands of reader comments. I play Wordscraper with a daughter and a grandson, but do nothing else with Facebook. I download the NYT crossword, check movie reviews on http://www.imdb.com, look at political cartoons on http://www.washingtonpost.com, and note obituaries on http://www.gvnews.com. All my Pima Library reserves are by computer. I have links to the menus of my favorite restaurants.

I use Open Office spreadsheet to keep statistics for the GVR Shuffleboard Club, and I manage my photo collection with Windows Explorer and Photoshop Elements. I'd hate to do without email.

I'm content with Wordpad for writing things, including this column. I still write useful little programs using the antiquated QBasic. I measure my walks by GPS. But I ignore Skype, Picasa, Windows 7 and online banking, though I do order stuff from http://www.amazon.com.

With my new BFF, the iPod touch, I play the Scramble word game, listen to music, take photos and go online. I marvel that such technology can be bundled in such a small package: it holds my lifetime music collection and my lifetime photo collection. And, as we heard at the CCGV meeting in January, the Apple iPad is even more amazing, now with 300,000 apps.

This month I bought a Blu-Ray DVD player and a 50" plasma TV, and I'm astonished by all the functions that were not available on my 22-year-old Sony, including wireless access to all the photos on my computer, and free streaming of Netflix movies. The old Sony still works, so make an offer.

11

**The Next Regular Meeting will be at
The Severn River Middle School**

Wednesday
March 9th, 2011

**Meeting will be held in the large meeting room.
It starts at 7:00 P.M. with club business
and a short discussion period.**

presentation on

Streaming Video
by

Mike DeLucia

**Members and their friends are welcome to
come, ask questions and become enlightened.**

How to Find: Severn River Middle School

SRMS is close to the Arnold, MD campus of the Anne Arundel Community College. From Annapolis and points south, take Rte 2 (Ritchie Highway) north about 3 miles from the intersection of Rt. 50, **turn right on College Parkway**. At the first light, turn left on Peninsula Farm Road. (Of course, if you are coming from points North, you would turn left onto College Parkway) about a half-mile down the road the large SRMS school building, set back off a large two level parking lot, will be visible on your right. Park here and go to the main entrance. Signs will be posted to direct you to the **Large Group Room** where we will be meeting.

How to find: The Technology SIG, A ChPCUG Special Interest Group**

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.

Chesapeake PC Users Group

**1783 Forest Drive #285
Annapolis, MD 21401**

FIRST CLASS

INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!

**President's Corner
Streaming Video
Nasty Virus
Dick's Click
Gmail
... and a little bit more!**

Note: The date above your name on the mailing label is the expiration date of your membership. Contact the Membership Chairman (page 2, column 2) to update.

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