



MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Volume 28, Number 8

August 2011

WAUCtalk

Wisconsin All-computer Users Club

<http://www.wauc.info>

**General Meeting, 7 p.m.
Thursday, August 4, 2011**

Famous Annual

Indoor Picnic

Bring a dish to pass and enjoy the drinks and meat supplied by the club on August 4 at 7 p.m.

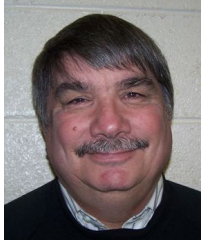
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August at a Glance

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| 4 WAUC General Meeting, 7:00 PM
Jackson Park Lutheran Church
4535 W. Oklahoma Ave.
Topic—Famous Indoor Picnic | 15 Deadline for submitting articles
for WAUCtalk, please send to:
ricejulia@hotmail.com
Subject: WAUCtalk |
| 10 WAUC Lunch, 1 PM, Country
Buffet, 4902 S. 74th
RSVP: terryharvey@wi.rr.com | 18 Internet SIG, 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton |
| 10 Mac SIG, 6:30 PM
Wauwatosa Library
76th & North Ave. | 24 Investment Tracking SIG, 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton |
| 11 MS Excel SIG, 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton | 25 Exec. Bd. Meeting, 7:00 PM
Doris Regner's Home |
| | Future Presentations:
• September— TBA |

President's Message—Windows Closing, Keep Heat Out



Everybody's hot! hot! hot! I guess summer is really here. Turn on the air or open the windows.

Windows Vista SP1. Vista users are encouraged to upgrade to Service Pack 2 or move to Windows 7.

Microsoft will discontinue support for Windows Vista altogether on April 10, 2012, however extended support will end in 2017. Support for Windows XP ended on April 14, 2009; however extended support will end in April 2014.

due to be released either next April or the fall of 2012 depending on who you listen to. While many users are die hard Windows XP fans, moving on may be inevitable.

Time marches on and while new Windows open, old Windows must close.

Have a great August and see you at the fair.

Speaking of Windows, if you are a fanatic about previous versions of Windows OS, then the end is near if it hasn't already arrived. Microsoft has announced that last month it ended support for Win-

Meanwhile Windows 8 is

Bruce Kosbab

Note from Terry Harvey



Here are some keyboard shortcuts that will help with Windows 7.

- 1 – Help.
- F3 – Toggle on/off search panel.
- F4 – Pull down ad-

dress bar.

- F5 – Refresh current page.
- F6 -Move focus to address bar.
- F11 – Toggle on/off full-screen mode
- Alt + (Left Arrow) – Go back on history (same as Backspace).
- Alt + (Right Arrow) – Go forward on history.

- Ctrl + A – Select All.
- Ctrl + C – Copy Selected.
- Ctrl + E – Search panel.
- Ctrl + F – Find (on page).
- Ctrl + H – Toggle History panel.
- Ctrl + I – Toggle Favorites panel.
- Ctrl + L – Open a File.
- Ctrl + N – Open New browser window.
- Ctrl + P – Print current page.
- Ctrl + R – Refresh. Same as F5.
- Esc – Stop (while page is loading).
- Ctrl + D – Add the current page to Favorites.

Double-click (on a word) – Select the word.

Triple-click (on a word) – Select entire line.

Wheel click – Activate the Smooth scrolling

Hold Ctrl + Scroll Wheel forward – Increase font size

Hold Ctrl + Scroll Wheel backward – Decrease font size

Click one point then hold down Shift and then click another – Create a selection from the two points

Hope these are helpful.

Address Changes

If you are changing your email or home address, please note:

Email address changes should be sent to Terry Harvey at terryharvey@wi.rr.com and Tom Livermore at exyooper@gmail.com

Home address changes should be sent to Tom Hermann at singer@execpc.com

WAUCtalk

WAUCtalk is a monthly publication of the Wisconsin All-computer Users Club. WAUC is a computer club dedicated to promoting and instructing the use of computers to WAUC members. Membership in WAUC is \$25 per year (\$12.50 if applying after June 1). WAUCtalk is emailed to all WAUC members.

Contributions to WAUCtalk are always welcome. Please submit articles and computer artwork before the 15th of the month preceding the issue date, except where otherwise noted. Free advertising is available to WAUC members. We are not responsible for omissions or errors.

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MS Excel SIG—Attendants Solve Excel Problems

The following 6 members attended the Microsoft (MS) Excel 2007 SIG on Thursday July 14, 2011: Judith Hornburg, Don Gardner, Mary S., Bill Gierach, Bruce Kosbab, and Ginny Splinter.

Bruce's Teaching Summary Part 2 of 2

Bruce gave us another overview of the material we covered in the Beginning section. Then he gave us 4 Excel problems to solve and 2 Excel examples.

Problem 1

Goal: You are a business fleet manager of 50 vehicles. Create a sheet for each vehicle and include all vehicle information, maintenance information, and photo.

We created an Excel workbook. For the first worksheet on a vehicle and in the first column, we added the names: Company ID, Make, Model, Year, Style, Color, VIN#, Lic. No., and Mileage. For the second column, we entered various values.

Then we wanted to format all cells by adding borders. In the Home tab, Font group, and Borders, select All Borders. Next, we bolded our category names. To format each data entry, in the Home tab and Cells group, select Format, Format Cells, your desired format, and OK. We copied and pasted a truck picture to the right of our data entries and in the upper half section.

Problem 2

Goal: Create an inventory of personal and household items for insurance purposes.

We created an Excel workbook. For the first worksheet and first column, we entered the names: Item, Make, Model, Color, Purchased (date), Cost, ID No., and Room Loc. In the second column, data was entered. At the right, a picture was pasted. After leaving a blank row, this format was repeated using only 2 to 3 items per worksheet. Later, one could copy this info to a CD, DVD, or USB Flash

Drive and store in a safety deposit box.

Problem 3

Goal: You are having a yard sale with 2 other people. Create a sheet listing all items for sale, who is selling them, and the cost.

We created an Excel Workbook. In the first Excel Worksheet and its first row, we entered the names: Items, Type, Cost, Seller, and Sold. We formatted each cell using the approach in the previous Problem 1. Next we entered some data.

To sort by Seller and then by Item, in the Home tab and Editing group, select Sort and Filter, and Custom Sort. In Column and Sort By, select Seller and its Sort On Values and Order options. Next, select Add Level, Column and Then By, select Items and its Sort On Values and Order options. Then select OK.

TIP: If you have an Excel Worksheet and need to use the top rows for titles, you can easily sort your table by highlighting the table info below the titles at the top. Excel will then pick up your column names which aren't in the first row for sort selecting.

Problem 4

Goal: Create a simple Treasurer's report for the month of March 2011.

We used an Excel worksheet with titles in the top rows: Garden Club, Financial Statement, and March 2011. In the next row, we created the following columns: Date, Received/Paid, Inc, Expenses, and Balance. Next we entered data for various Incomes and calculated Balance. Then we entered the data for various Expenses and calculated Balance. On the bottom, we added data for Checking, Savings, and CD and calculated Balances.

Bruce's Driver Schedule Calendar Example

From a request, Bruce again showed us the great monthly calendar he created for a Bus Driver Schedule.

He showed us how to copy and paste a current month's calendar to a new Worksheet, change the month and year title, and delete the daily entries. Then, looking at where the current month's last day is located, enter "1" for the next month's day in the proper location. Then drag this number across the 1st week row. For



Auto Fill Options, select Fill Series. At the beginning of the 2nd week, enter the correct day number, and repeat the above step. Do this for the entire month. This is a quick way to create a new month.

Bruce's Name & Address Example

Often one wants to create a name and address Excel Workbook. Bruce showed us a membership example with the first row having the column names: First Name, Last Name, Address, City, State, ZIP, Telephone, Member Thru, Email, and Phone. To determine where most of your members live, sort this file by state and then city.

All of us are grateful for Bruce's sharing with us his vast Excel work experience. Thanks, Bruce, for the great job!

Next month Ginny Splinter will continue our Excel 2007 tutorial series in the Intermediate and Advanced sections. We will start with Chapter 12 Creating 3D Formulas, and Chapter 13 Named Ranges. Join us next month for an exciting Excel session.

Ginny Splinter

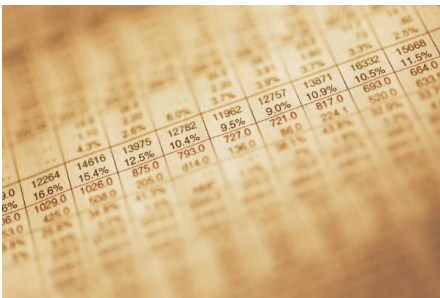
Investment Tracking SIG—Virtual Trading Continues



As agreed by the attendees of the WAUC Investment SIG at the meeting of May 2011, the SIG will continue to be held during the summer

months and therefore the SIG met again on June 22. The only WAUC members attending were Richard Durand, Don Gardner, and Dale Voit. The founder of our SIG, Bruce Schneider had been in the hospital the previous week and was now home but still recovering and could not be present.

We started out exploring a very interesting website that he had forwarded to the rest of us by email: www.etfchannel.com/. This is a site



devoted to information about the investment vehicle known as the "Exchange Traded Fund," or "ETF." Briefly, an ETF is a fund of stocks or other securities, similar to a mutual fund, but its expenses are lower and it actively trades like a stock on the major exchanges. The number of ETFs available to trade increases steadily with increasing specialization into more and more indexes and sectors. The displacement of mutual funds and individual stocks by ETFs cannot be understated. This website offers a wealth of information about all the ETFs in the market. One of its features, which we tried out, is entering a stock ticker symbol and clicking a button to see which ETFs presently include the stock. This is a new investing site we had not known about and we were impressed.

After checking out the ETF site, Dale

had some stocks he wanted to show us and so we went to one of our favorite sites, www.stockmaven.com and entered the symbols. Zagg Inc., ZAGG, which makes protective clear coverings for smartphones, was priced at about \$2.00 per share a year ago and is now at \$14.00. Javalution Coffee, JCOF, was at about 5 cents per share until March of this year and has now shot up to 72 cents per share.

Bizrocket.com, BZRT, was just issued early this year, is now trading at about 8 cents per share and Dale thinks it could be huge. We thought we might as well buy some in the internet virtual account of the SIG and so we went to the website www.investopedia.com and logged in. But the trade we tried to place with BZRT was rejected because this system, for some unknown reason, does not accept trades of penny stocks, those priced at less than one dollar per share. So instead we entered a trade for 1,000 shares of ZAGG.

We also looked at our portfolio of stocks purchased at the SIG earlier in the year. All had lost money except for our shares of Toyota, TM, suggested by Rex Neilson. Of course, beginning in May this year, the overall market, as per the Dow Jones index and other indexes, has plateaued and then declined, though it still shows an increase for the year



to date. Dale has been trading these stocks we looked up and is very pleased with the results.

After this, we played part of an investing DVD passed along by Bruce Schneider, "Bernie Schaeffer's Options 101," from

www.schaeffersresearch.com. Bernie Schaeffer is not a broker but a long-time advisor, selling subscriptions to his recommendations. This DVD is one of his educational promotional products offered to drum up



business. Most of the material on the disk was of text files explaining what options are and how to trade them.

We looked at only a couple of them; one on "The Most Dangerous Errors in Trading," and one on "Money Management." Both offered some insightful and useful trading advice. There were also some "multimedia" files on the disk which turned out to be Power Point files with narration. We watched the one on an option strategy known as the "credit spread." In this strategy, one sells a call or put and buys another put or call to hedge the sale, keeping the net funds received after the options expire. Profits are relatively small compared to other strategies and the risk to reward ratio is rather unfavorable, but the probability of success can be very, very high, 80% or more. Richard has started using this strategy and showed how it worked by logging on to his brokerage site, www.optionsxpress.com.

After that, we saw we had run over our time limit and packed it up. As always, we had a great time telling each other about our trades and discussing current market trends. Until next time, remember, "Always use stop loss orders and don't look back."

*Richard Durand
WAUC Member*

Internet SIG—Club Laptop Not Eligible for Windows 7

The WAUC Internet SIG had a good turnout of eleven members for its meeting on June 16th, and a lot of computer issues were dealt with.

First, Dolores Dettmann asked about the anti-spyware program, Malwarebytes. Bill Gierach had it and was able to save it to Dolores's flash drive. It is also on the WAUC CD of the Month.

Terry Harvey asked if the club laptop should be upgraded to Windows 7 and Bill explained that it does not have enough RAM. Richard Durand had brought his old Hewlett Packard laptop, the one he had brought the previous month, which connects to a Verizon mobile hotspot but does not display web pages. As per the SIG's suggestion, Windows XP Service Pack 3 had been installed but the problem persists. Tom Livermore told again the Run command to use is "IPCONFIG /ALL." The resulting screen still shows no default gateway listed which might be the problem. Tech support will have to be called.

Dolores's Firefox browser no longer saves tabs. One thing that can be done is to go to History and select "Restore Previous Session." A more permanent solution is to go to Tools on the menu bar, select Add-ons, do a search, and select an appropriate choice, such as "Save My Tabs."

Terry asked if there are Firefox add-ons for games. Yes. We did a search and found a lot of them. While we were working with Firefox, Bill showed how to use the Master Password add-on.

Avis Davidson has a situation with getting the error message, "404 Not Found," when trying to access her personally-paid-for domain, "pics4hulu" at blogspot.com. We went to the blogspot site, tried again with the same results, moused around the site looking for help resources, and even tried googling the question. Nothing. The best course of action might be to try posting a

question to the help forum of the site.

Terry now asked about getting animated themes for one's iGoogle page, such as "Fox and Tea Party." Starting at one's iGoogle page, click on "change theme from classic" and



do a search. The "Fox and Tea Party" was not found but there were lots and lots of other cool themes and the one Terry remembered seeing was finally found listed as "Tea House."

Richard asked if "Favorites" can be alphabetized in Internet Explorer. Click on Favorites in the menu bar, trace down to one of the listings, right-click to get a drop down menu, and select the one at the bottom of the menu, "Sort by Name." Works perfectly.

Avis asked if one's IE Favorites can be saved. Go to File and then select Import and Export. Terry remembered that one used to be able to right click on any web page in Internet Explorer and select "send to" to generate an email that would include the web page in the body. We tried it and this selection is no longer available, but one can still use this

method to send the web page as a link in an email.

Rex Nielson asked about what kind of connectors are used in cables for transferring data from one computer to another. In Google, we found a lot of choices for this kind, including one Rex is considering, "Windows 7 Easy Transfer." The connectors appear to be USB.

Terry asked about how to get Gmail, which is web mail, into Thunderbird, a regular email program. Open Thunderbird and go to Tools/Account Settings/Account Wizard and one of the choices in the window that opens up is Gmail. One also has to do the correct settings in Gmail.

We explored Thunderbird for a while and Terry asked how to set up the ability to enter a star on selected emails. There is an icon on the right of the headings that when clicked on opens up the heading selections and from here the "star" column can be selected to be shown. Once this column is shown, one can click in it for any email to "star" or "unstar" it.

Dolores asked about how to save picture files on to a CD-ROM. Bill opened up the CD-ROM recording program on the club computer, Nero, and showed how selected files can be dragged and dropped to be recorded. He didn't have the time or the blank disk to complete the process but that's for another SIG.

As usual, there were a lot of different computer issues that came up. So many, that anyone attending this SIG can't help but learn. Try to attend as often as you can.

Richard Durand
WAUC Member

Word Tip: Understanding Hyphens and Dashes

Understanding Hyphens and Dashes
Word supports the use of both hyphens and dashes. Actually, it supports three types of hyphens and two types of dashes. It is important to understand how Word handles each of these, as they can affect the appearance of your document.

Regular hyphens. These are created by simply typing the hyphen key. This is the key that is to the right of the zero key on the keyboard. It is sometimes mistakenly called a dash key. Regular hyphens are used to create compound words, such as “mix-up,” or to indicate a minus sign in an equation. If a compound word appears near the end of a line, the second word will be displayed on the next line, if necessary, with the first word and hyphen remaining on the previous line.

Optional hyphens. These are created by pressing **CTRL+-** (**CTRL** and the hyphen key). Optional hyphens are typically used in the middle of a word, between syllables, to indicate where a word should be broken between lines, if Word deems it necessary. Optional hyphens are the type inserted automatically when you use the Hyphenation tool in Word. The optional hyphen does not appear on any printout unless it is actually used at the end of a line.

Non-breaking hyphens.

These are created by pressing **CTRL+SHIFT+-** (**CTRL+SHIFT** and the hyphen key). Non-breaking hyphens are used in compound words to indicate that both words and the hyphen should be treated as a single word when Word is forming lines. In this case, the compound word will never be broken over two lines. It is also helpful to use non-breaking hyphens in phone numbers.

En dash. An en dash is a typographic dash that is as wide as a lowercase “n” character. These dashes are typically used to denote ranges of numbers, as in 3–7. You create an en dash by pressing **CTRL** and the minus sign on the numeric keypad. You can also create it by holding down the **ALT** key as you type 0150 on the numeric keypad. If necessary, Word will break a line right after the en dash, not before it. In other words, the en dash always stays with the characters immediately preceding it.

Em dash. An em dash is a typographic dash that is supposed to be as wide as a lowercase “m” character. In Word, however, the em dash is twice as wide as the en dash. (The width of the em-dash can vary from font to font.) Em dashes are used in creating breaks in sentences, between

two separate thoughts. Word will substitute an em dash automatically as you are typing if you type a word, two hyphens in a row, and another word. You can also explicitly enter an em dash if you press **CTRL+ALT** and the minus sign on the numeric keypad, or you can enter one by holding down the **ALT** key as you type 0151 on the numeric keypad. If necessary, Word will break a line right after the em dash, not before it. The em dash always stays with the word immediately before it.

The foregoing items describe the behavior and purpose of each of the hyphens and dashes used in Word. If you are using a dash or hyphen and it does not behave as indicated here, then you may be using the wrong type. For instance, if a word will not break as you expect between two lines, you may be using a non-breaking hyphen instead of one of the other types.

Copyright © 2011 by Sharon Parq Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Thousands of free Microsoft Word tips can be found online at <http://word.tips.net>.

Mac SIG News—Lion Coming

The Mac SIG did not meet in July. It is not that there is nothing to talk about. The new operating system (Lion) is coming out this month so the next meetings will be new learning sessions.

Understanding ISPs—Internet Service Providers

ISPs offer services like email and internet access. In addition to availability, you may want to consider other factors so that you find an ISP that supports all of your needs.

What is an ISP?

An ISP, or internet service provider, is a company that provides its customers access to the internet and other web services. In addition to maintaining a direct line to the internet, the company usually maintains web servers. By supplying necessary software, a password-protected user account, and a way to connect to the internet (e.g., modem), ISPs offer their customers the capability to browse the web and exchange email with other people. Some ISPs also offer additional services. With the development of smart phones, many cell phone providers are also ISPs.

ISPs can vary in size; some are operated by one individual, while others are large corporations. They may also vary in scope; some only support users in a particular city, while others have regional or national capabilities.



What services do ISPs provide?

Almost all ISPs offer email and web browsing capabilities. They also offer varying degrees of user support, usually in the form of an email address or customer support hotline. Most ISPs also offer web hosting capabilities, allowing users to create and maintain personal web pages;

and some may even offer the service of developing the pages for you. Some ISPs bundle internet service with other services, such as television and telephone service. Many ISPs offer a wireless modem as part of their service so that customers can use devices equipped with Wi-Fi.

As part of normal operation, most ISPs perform backups of email and web files. If the ability to recover email and web files is important to you, check with your ISP to see if they back up the data; it might not be advertised as a service. Additionally, most ISPs implement firewalls to block some portion of incoming traffic, although you should consider this a supplement to your own security precautions, not a replacement (see Understanding Firewalls for more information).

How do you choose an ISP?

Traditional, broadband ISPs typically offer internet access through cable, DSL, or fiberoptic options. The availability of these options may depend where you live. In addition to the type of access, there are other factors that you may want to consider:

* security - Do you feel that the ISP is concerned about security? Does it use encryption and SSL (see Protecting Your Privacy for more information) to protect any information you submit (e.g., user name, password)? If the ISP provides a wireless modem, what wireless security standards does it support, and are those standards compatible with your existing devices?

* privacy - Does the ISP have a published privacy policy? Are you comfortable with who has access to your information and how it is being handled and used?

* services - Does your ISP offer the services you want? Do they meet your requirements? Is there adequate support for the services? If the ISP provides a wireless modem, are its wireless standards compatible with your existing devices?

* cost - Are the ISP's costs affordable? Are they reasonable for the

number of services you receive, as well as the level of those services? Are you sacrificing quality and security to get the lowest price?

* reliability - Are the services your ISP provides reliable, or are they frequently unavailable due to mainte-



nance, security problems, a high volume of users, or other reasons? If the ISP knows that services will be unavailable for a particular reason, does it adequately communicate that information?

* user support - Are there published methods for contacting customer support? Do you receive prompt and friendly service? Do their hours of availability accommodate your needs? Do the consultants have the appropriate level of knowledge?

* speed - How fast is your ISP's connection? Is it sufficient for accessing your email or navigating the internet?

* recommendations - Have you heard or seen positive reviews about the ISP? Were they from trusted sources? Does the ISP serve your geographic area? If you've uncovered negative points, are they factors you are concerned about?

Author: Mindi McDowell
Produced 2004 by US-CERT, a government organization.



Killer App of the 21st Century—A Dream

By Vinny LaBash, Contributing Columnist,
Sarasota PCUG, Florida
June 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor.
www.spcug.org
labash (at) spcug.org

Over the years, and more than once, my wife has said “Until computers work the way they do on Star Trek, they are not ready for prime time”. She has a point. While computers, smart phones, laptops, tablets, and other close relatives of PCs have certainly become ubiquitous in our society, they are among the most complex devices ever developed by human beings. Their internal complexity rivals that of the most advanced F-22 fighter planes. No one expects grandma to climb into the cockpit of one of these things and be an expert after a few lessons because no one expects an F-22 fighter to be easy to use.

Despite what you have been hearing for years, computers are not easy to use, and they are anything but intuitive. If Isaac Newton were suddenly transported from the 17th century to the present and handed a smart phone, he would have no idea what to do with it. The ability to make a computer do something useful has nothing to do with intelligence and everything to do with familiarity. Twelve year olds have no problems with smart phones or other devices controlled by microchips because these objects have always been a part of their young lives. Most adults have not enjoyed a similar advantage, and many feel that technology often works against them.

The problem is that people have had to adjust to the needs of technology rather than the other way around. That is the basis of my wife’s complaint about computers. She thinks they should adjust to her, and I believe she is right. In the 1982 movie “Firefox”, Clint Eastwood played a character sent on a covert mission to the Soviet Union to steal an advanced aircraft that could be controlled by the pilot’s thoughts through a neural link. This was and still is science fiction, but it’s also a good

example of digital technology adjusting to the needs of analog beings like us.

The “Killer App” of the 21st century will be a tool that makes computers and other complex devices adapt to us. It already exists, but it’s still in its infancy or perhaps even its embryonic stage. Wherever it is on the evolutionary scale, it has not yet moved much beyond the multi-cellular level. We’re talking about present day speech recognition, a considerable distance from Star Trek where machines understand natural language and react to it as another person would.

Windows 7 has speech recognition built-in. You don’t have to pay extra for it. Using it can be quite entertaining as well as educational. Set it up on your computer with a three step process accessed within Windows Control Panel. You will need either a stand-alone microphone or one attached to a headset. The headset-microphone combination is the better option. It’s comfortable, and the headset filters out extraneous noise better than most standalone mikes.

It’s tempting to get started quickly, but to get the best results you need to setup your microphone properly. Access the **Configure Your Speech Recognition** dialog box, and select **Set up Microphone**. Tell Windows what kind of microphone you’re using and the **Setup Wizard** will tell you how to position your equipment and set your audio level.

Now comes the hard part. Bring up the **Configure Your Speech Recognition** dialog box again and select **Train Your Computer to Understand You**. The Wizard will now guide you through some phrases which give Windows the information it needs to understand how to interpret and execute your commands. Training the computer may be annoying, but it is nowhere near as irritating as trying to get your dog to fetch, heel, roll over, and play dead.

Microsoft has thoughtfully provided a reference card which explains how you tell Windows to handle common speech recognition commands, keyboard shortcuts, punctuation marks, and other special characters. You can print it out from the **Control Panel’s Speech Recognition** dialog box. Windows will not respond to “Go jump in the lake,” nor will it attempt to perform any anatomically impossible acts. Keep your requests reasonable, and Windows will get along with you just fine.

Smart phones are also getting into the voice activation business. Newer Android models have a neat application that does some very useful things. Google Voice Search is nothing short of amazing. I spoke into my recently purchased Android driven HTC Thunderbolt “Pictures of Ringling Causeway Bridge” and the result was four pictures of the bridge, including a map of how to get there from my Sarasota location.

I then tried “How far from the earth is the Moon?” This brought up a selection of web sites, one informing me of the distance in miles, and a second of the distance in kilometers. There were loads of additional astronomical information about our nearest planetary neighbor, far too much to explore in one session, but lots of reasons for a return visit for the curious.

Next was “Directions to Starbucks”. I instantly knew the location of all the Starbucks in Sarasota, and I had my choice of getting directions by public or private transportation. The application even offered directions by bicycle or foot.

In an effort to stump it I asked “How can we get rid of Khadafi?” Incredibly, the thing gave me an answer that might actually work. The Pentagon should be informed.

It effortlessly translated units of measurement from one system to

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

another such as miles to kilometers, and yards to centimeters. It told me a gallon of water weighs approximately 8.35 pounds, and on and on. I finally stopped it cold when I asked it to change miles per hour into furlongs

per fortnight, but that was probably unfair.

Google is doing a great job with getting technology to adapt to us. There is still a long way to go, but the future looks promising which brings us back to Star Trek. Whenever Captain

Picard wants tea, he always asks for it the same way. He says "Tea, Earl, Grey, hot." Why can't he say something like "Tea, my usual?" I suspect the computer is smart enough, and the fault lies in the scriptwriter's lack of imagination.

Bean—A Simple Streamlined Writing App

By Lee Maxwell, co-facilitator, MacWaves workgroup - www.gladmax.com
June 2011 issue, BCUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users Group, NJ
www.bcug.com
leemaxwell (at) gladmax.com

It is rare when writing a software review that you use the product you are reviewing. But here I am, writing a review of Bean, an optimized word processor software for Mac OS X that does its job well without frills. Actually, this isn't a word processor; my mistaken assumption. Let the text about Bean from its own website set us all straight: "Bean is a small, easy-to-use word processor (or more precisely, a rich text editor), designed to make writing convenient, efficient and comfortable." Bean is available free of charge. MS Word, OpenOffice, etc. try to be all things to all people. But sometimes you just want the right tool for the job. That is Bean's niche. "Bean is lean, fast, and uncluttered.

- If you get depressed at the thought of firing up MS Word or OpenOffice, try Bean.
- If you use Text Edit but have to jump through hoops just to get a word count, try Bean.
- If you desire a simple, beautiful writing environment, try Bean."

I couldn't have stated it plainer myself. Thanks to Bean's creator and maintainer, James Hoover, for letting me use his own promotional text. I do get depressed just thinking about firing up Word, so I've always looked for worthy alternatives.

I've used previous Apple alternatives to Word, ClarisWorks and AppleWorks, but found their interfaces unpolished and frustrating. Pages, Apple's combination word processor and page layout software and until recently only available as part of iWork, is a better page layout program than word processor.

My favorite for years has been NeoOffice, a Mac version of the OpenOffice suite, which is free, open source and has lots of useful features, but is as big and almost as bloated as Microsoft Office. It

can be very slow even on newer, faster Macs, because it's underpinning is Java, an operating system within Mac OS X that just runs slow.

I had hope for the Mac version of the Linux-based word processor AbiWord, which also is free and open source, but I was turned off by numerous unfixed and unacknowledged software bugs in the Mac version. And there are and were good shareware word processors like MarinerWrite and NisusWriter, but they never appealed to me.

Then MacWaves member Jim McKeown told me about Bean. And my life changed forever. [Well, not really, but it felt like it, the first time I used Bean.]

Why do I like Bean? Let me bullet the reasons:

It's free.

It's open source, meaning no company owns any intellectual property rights to the code. It also means it is continuously undergoing fixing and improvement by its volunteer developers.

It's a "Cocoa" application, meaning it's written in the same computer language as Mac OS X and other software by Apple, which gives it greater stability and feature set. Many of the features listed here are provided by Cocoa. Unfortunately, it also inherits some bugs and limitations in the Cocoa framework, but blame Apple for that.

It reads and writes many word processor documents formats, including vital ones like Microsoft Word [.doc and .docx], the OpenDocument [.odt] format used by OpenOffice, LibreOffice and NeoOffice, the common Rich Text Format [.rtf] and rich text with graphics [.rtfd] formats, text files, HyperText Markup Language [.html] files and eXtensible Markup Language [.xml] files, Apple's [.webarchive] format and its own [.bean] format, and can export

files as Portable Document Format [.pdf] files.

It offers an Inspector panel with just the right controls for character and paragraph settings, which I think is almost as good as having these items listed at the top of the window under the button bar [how about making that an option, huh?].

It also uses Apple sheets, pop-down dialog boxes linked to the button bar, to display indepth statistics and information about the document and information about the author, which the author can fill in.

It includes a dictionary to which custom words can be added, interactive misspelling indicators, powerful word or expression search and replace features.

It has many other great features like a live word and character count about each document in the status bar, an interactive zoom slider to easily magnify or demagnify the page size, a full-screen mode, a page layout mode, autosaving, alternative colors [white text on a blue background rather than black text on white; definitely easier to read].

Did I mention it's free? Sure it doesn't allow for floating images, only in-line [embedded in text] images.

Sure it doesn't do footnotes, or allow for text styles. And, as Mr. Hoover warns, "Bean should not be considered a replacement for Word, or any other word processor designed for complex documents involving, for example, citations." So what? There is always Word or one of its freeware clones.

Bean is exactly the simple writing tool I've always looked for, a sports car with only the parts it needs to be a sports car. It is a freeware gem, a shining example of what good software can be. Get it; you won't regret it.

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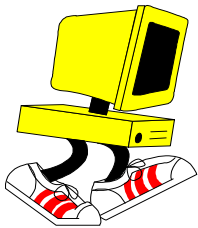
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