

Bits & Bytes

A Newsletter from the Gold Country Computer Learning Center

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Profile.....

Nancy Maxwell – A Teacher's Teacher

Nancy Maxwell has a *big* job—and she is very modest about it. As chair of GCCLC's largest committee—the Education Committee—her work has a direct and profound impact on the quality of instruction the Learning Center provides to its students.

"I was born in San Diego," she told me, "and grew up in Jamestown, New York. I moved back to California at the age of 12 and lived in the San Fernando Valley. In 1986, I moved to Grass Valley."

Nancy had visited the Nevada City/Grass Valley area in the 1970s with her children and her mom. "We were just passing through here but I fell in love with the area and wanted to live here ever since the first day I saw it.

"I have three children," Nancy said, "I have a son in Southern California, a daughter in Southern California who has her own income tax and property management company, and my youngest son is the president of a computer consulting firm in Livermore."

"I finished high school and had some college courses," Nancy said, "but because I was raising a family I only held part time jobs until I joined Thrifty Drug. I was a sales associate there for 19 and-a-half years."

Nancy was injured at work and had to quit, but in the process of being retrained for other work, she learned about computers. "I loved computers," she said. "Later, I saw a Learning Center ad in the newspaper and I thought, that's something I can do." Nancy has been a Learning Center volunteer for four years.

As Chair of GCCLC's Education Committee, Nancy works with the instructors to help develop their teaching skills. She meets twice a year with the instructors and her committee members to talk about teaching innovations, new manuals, and the like. "I have my fingers in a lot of different pies," she says.

In addition to the work Nancy does with the instructors and the people who develop new manuals, she works closely with Karen Pfanenstiel, the volunteer recruitment and assignment chair and Doug Worthy, the lab monitor chair—both members of her committee.

"Nancy is the head of our Education Committee," offered Bob Reeves, "and as a result of that she is responsible for the quality of education we offer. She's responsible for the instructors and the kind of job they do and she's responsible for the coaches and the kind of job they do. She's very, very conscientious about having periodic meetings with the instructors and coaches to pass on whatever guidance she can give. She's always willing to jump in and tackle most any job. We're delighted to have Nancy on our team."

"Nancy is really a beloved person," said Karen Pfanenstiel, Nancy's co-chair and GCCLC's volunteer coordinator. "She's willing to help everyone. She'll even go to students' homes if they have a computer problem they can't solve. She goes way beyond the call of duty. Nancy has a deep faith in people and is quick to jump in and help solve problems. I can't tell you how many times people tell me 'Oh, I want to coach for Nancy.'"



Carol Kuhwarth said, “Nancy is so good at helping people! There have been many times that her whole day is filled with going around to students’ homes and helping them. There isn’t anything she wouldn’t do for you. That’s her claim to fame.”

“Nancy is always a leader in spirit and practice,” says Joan Goodherts. “She has an insatiable appetite for learning and she’s had technical training in computer hardware, something Nancy refers to as ‘the brain.’ She is hardworking and dedicated to finding solutions. She’s instrumental in the development of educational software and is a consultant for students who request help. She’s always there for anybody who asks. She’s a walking knowledge base—and always with a sense of humor. She is a compassionate friend and caregiver, loved and respected by all whose lives she touches. She’s also a super bartender at Community Center events!”

High praise, indeed, for a Teacher’s Teacher!

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GCCLC To Withdraw From SeniorNet

The Learning Center plans to withdraw from SeniorNet, effective December 31, 2005, according to Bob Reeves, GCCLC Council coordinator.

SeniorNet is a national non-profit organization that supports over 200 Learning Centers throughout the US with instructional materials, software, and other teaching assistance.

“The Coordinating Council has been talking about withdrawing from SeniorNet for a number of years,” says Reeves. “But we realized that this would not be possible until we could replace the course manuals and software that SeniorNet has been providing. Many of our Council members and instructors have worked very hard to write new manuals. We have now completed manuals for all of our basic courses. And we are making provisions to purchase the needed software.

“The council has looked very carefully at the notion of going it alone from many angles. We believe it makes good economic sense and will give us greater independence and an ability to develop and improve our programs.”

GCCLC is required to pay membership dues to SeniorNet. What it receives in return is the right to use SeniorNet manuals, software, and logo. “We looked at

the costs and we looked at the benefits and they simply didn’t balance,” said Reeves.

The Learning Center has been with SeniorNet since its program began five years ago. As Reeves said, “SeniorNet was instrumental in getting us up and running. Without their help we probably wouldn’t have made it, and we thank them for that. But now, we are a more mature and experienced organization and we have developed the ability to manage our own program effectively. The good news is that our students, instructors, and coaches should not notice the change.”

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Tech Tips

Submitted by: Dick Thompson

Windows Start-Up

Windows tends to load a lot of programs at start-up. Many of these may not be needed for your purposes. Also, when you install new programs, they may have “open at startup” set as a default. Allowing unneeded programs to load slows the start-up and it also may unnecessarily hog resources. Unless you use a program daily, it probably makes sense to just create a shortcut for the desktop, and not have the program available all the time. That way, you only load it if you need it. Here’s what you can do to streamline start-up.

Go to start/run and type 'msconfig' in the box and click OK. Choose 'selective startup' on the 'general' tab, and then click on the 'startup' tab.

A list of programs will appear and the checked ones show which ones will load when you boot windows. If you see programs checked that seem unnecessary, you can uncheck them and then apply the changes. Windows will then want you to reboot. Once you do, you will be reminded that you have changed to 'selective startup'. If you wish, you can ask not to be reminded of this again.

Ahhh, but you ask: How do you know what all these programs are or what they do so you can decide which ones are necessary and which are not? You can Google the name and probably find more information than you will need. Or, you can check sites such as this one:

<http://www.lafn.org/webconnect/mentor/startup/PENINDEX.HTM>

**Have a favorite tip?
Email it to the editor at
publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org**



November Events

November Seminar.....

Wed., November 30 (1:00-4:00)
"A zillion new fun tools in Google"

Presented by Bob Reeves

Google has added many new fun tools. Learn how Google's Picasa can help you organize and edit your photos. Browse or read vintage books from world famous libraries. Do a desktop search with Google for those missing folders and files. Enter the world of bloggers and sort the meaningful ones from the useless ones. Look at the millions of images on the Internet sorted by categories,and much more.

Seminar fees are \$10, single and \$15, double. (\$5 for GCCLC volunteers.)

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November User Group meeting.....

Thursday, November 17 (9:00-11:00)
"Windows Media Player 10"

Presented by Mitch Bain and Nancy Maxwell

... a follow on to Roger's recent presentation on burning CDs and ripping music.

Mitch and Nancy will demonstrate Windows Media Player 10 and address all your questions. Time permitting, we will include all the following –

- Rip CDs to your computer
- Shop for music and video on the Internet

GCCLC Marketplace

This is an experiment. Bits & Bytes will publish "ads" from anyone who has computer equipment to sell or donate. Contact me at publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org and tell me what you have available, the price, if any, together with your phone number and/or email address. I will only carry your ad for one month. If you don't get a response that month and want to continue to advertise, you will need to contact me again. Remember, the newsletter is always published on the first of each month. *Editor*

- Demonstrate Streaming Radio/Archived Radio
- Organize your digital media collection
- Mix your music in playlists
- Make your own CDs

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Computer Ownership Thoughts – Part 2

By Doug Worthy

This is the second of a two-part article by Doug Worthy that started in the October newsletter.

A tremendous number of computers are being purchased these days but one still hears the question "Why do I need or want a computer?" Even those who already own a computer and who might say they "only want to send email" may find the following information informative.

9. Did you ever wonder if there was an easier way to send Christmas cards without having to write all those addresses by hand? There is. You can make peel-off address labels. Then, all you have to do is update and reprint your address list in following years. You can also make labels with your return address, so your envelopes can be done without ever having to lift a pen! In case you want to go really high-tech, you can get free electronic Christmas cards on the Internet. If your addressee has a computer (and knows how to access the Internet) you can send your card this way. You can personalize many of these kinds of cards also. Some cards are animated and have sound which makes them fun to receive. Actually, free greeting cards are available on the Web for all occasions. You can even create your own cards using free graphic programs available for your computer.
10. So you like to travel? You can do all your research and make all your arrangements on the Internet at your leisure. The whole trip can be planned; accommodations, airline tickets, car rentals etc. You can see photos of the accommodations beforehand for many hotels, resort areas, and motels. You can view the places you wish to visit, including the interiors of some buildings or museums. You can take a visual tour of a cruise ship. The possibilities are limitless.
11. Are you a writer? History buff? Love genealogy? Need to do research for a project? A computer



allows you to do just about whatever you can think of. Maybe you'd like to learn another language? Tutorials are available. Maybe you'd like to get a degree in something? There are online universities that specialize in this.

12. Besides creating greeting cards, you can create event flyers, business cards, postcards, mailing labels, and even your own calendars—pictures and all. You can print your own stationery, with colors, borders, pictures in the foreground or background, and personalized envelopes in many different sizes and colors.
13. Shopping is something that appeals to most of us, but if you'd rather do it from home, it's quite easy. Would you like to look at what's available at your favorite store before you waste any gasoline driving there? Many companies' Websites provide pictures, prices, specifications, and other details to help you decide. You can then buy and get delivery—all without having to fight voicemail to talk to a live person. If you wish to get some real bargains, there are several places to go on the Internet for these. You can also sell items. Ebay is very popular, but there are other sites. For people who are housebound or simply don't want to fight the traffic, this is a wonderful experience.
14. If you happen to own a small business you may have already discovered the advantages of keeping records on your computer. You can keep inventory records in a database, do accounting, and create spreadsheets for your customers and suppliers. All is possible. Many businesses have discovered they can save lots of money by using computers. The real estate business has very satisfactorily benefited from computer technology.
15. There are many graphic programs that allow computer users to do amazing and unique things with their photo collections. Besides storing them in files for preservation, you can enhance them, re-size them, make photo albums, create slide shows, email them to others, and place them in letters or stories you write. With the advent of digital cameras, you never need to buy film again or have to order prints or wait for someone to develop them. With digital cameras, you can use a plug-in cable connection to instantly view and store your photos on the computer.

16. Will the kinds of things I've mentioned produce cost savings? Yes, indeed! Just review the automated tasks I've listed and note where you could save money and how much. Include expenses like postage, gasoline, lower stock buying commissions, no greeting card expenses, no envelope purchases for letters, no newspapers to

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Perfume



“I want my husband to pay more attention to me. Got any perfume that smells like a computer?”

buy, no crossword puzzles or TV Guides to buy, no copying costs for documents, fewer phone calls, no calendars to buy, and so on. If your time is valuable, you'll benefit by doing much less running around. It's actually possible to offset the cost of your computer and printer over time through these savings. It's important to note, however, that there are some expenses that cannot be avoided, such as paying for an internet service provider, buying printer paper and cartridges, as examples. Watching for sales on these items is a good practice.

17. The U. S. Government has a staggering number of resources online. Virtually all branches of government—federal, state, and local—publish information on the Internet...all free. Many libraries, local municipalities, educational institutions, airports, gambling casinos, state parks, police departments, etc., have Websites from which you can gather data...all free. You can use www.DMV.CA.GOV, for example, to pay your auto registration fees, plus many other trip-saving DMV transactions at no cost.



18. Did you know you can order postage on the Internet? Did you know you can request the Postal Service to hold your mail when you go on vacation? You can do this on your computer from the comfort of your home. There are other postal services provided too. Just go to www.usps.com for details.
19. It's possible that, some day, we won't need TVs or telephones. The technology called VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) may be the answer for those who wish to hear a human's voice instead of just reading email. You can already watch movies on your computer. What's next?

The bottom line is that computer users have discovered that their machines and skill at using them can enhance their lives. You may decide to trade expensive entertainment like playing golf, going to the movies, or taking a cruise for time in front of your computer. It's nice to know that more time spent in the house can be so rewarding!

Editor's Addendum

One other thing; no matter how rare your interests are there are people around the world who share them. In a small town, you might be the only one who collects beer bottle caps from the '20s, but there are hundreds of folks in the world who do. The Internet gets you together. I know a fellow who collects and restores

Imperials from the early sixties. Somewhere there is a club or group of similar nuts numbering several hundred. The latch on your 1961 Imperial door just fell apart and you have only pieces? Cry for help, and guys all over the world will shoot a picture of a working one and have it on your desktop in an hour. It's amazing.

General Information and Contacts

Website – www.gcclc.org

Phone number for general information - 273-0497

For seminar and user group information and sign-up:

Call Joan at 273-6955 or,
Email seminar1@goldcountrycenter.org
The Community Center at 273-4961 can also sign-up you up for seminars.

For course registration:

Call Carol at 273-3029 or,
Email admin1@goldcountrycenter.org
You can also register online at our Website.

For volunteer information:

Call Karen at 470-0270 or,
Email ed2@goldcountrycenter.org
You can also volunteer online at our Website.

For free computer labs, sign up online at

www.goldcountrycenter.org/labsignup/calendar.php

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"Bits & Bytes is published on the first of each month by the Gold Country Computer Learning Center, Dick Mooney, Editor. If you have news or an announcement you would like to see included, please send it to the Editor at publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org or 478-0156."

