

# Bits & Bytes

A Newsletter from the Gold Country Computer Learning Center

Vol. 1, No. 2

August, 2005

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## Profile.....

*Roger Thornburn: A Man Of Many Talents.*

Roger Thornburn is really an interesting guy! He was born and grew up in a town near London, under conditions that we, who have never been blitz-bombed can appreciate. After the war, Roger's dad brought home all sorts of surplus war equipment, which Roger delighted in taking apart to see how they worked. He credits this with shaping his future as an electronic engineer.

"I went through all the normal schooling there and then I went to college at a place called the College of Electronics," he says. "It was in Malvern and it was associated with a government program called the Royal Radar Research Establishment. I did six months in college and six months of practical work with the Research Establishment until I graduated."

Roger finished with a degree in electrical engineering and electronics. Upon graduation, Roger got a job designing solid state IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) systems for a company called Cossor, a subsidiary of Raytheon. "From that, I moved on to a British Army project called 'Blowpipe' where I designed the guidance system for shoulder-launched missiles that

were used in the Falklands war," he expanded. "I wasn't particularly happy making killing machines so, in 1969, I got a sales job with Hewlett-Packard. H-P was still a relatively small company then but I stuck with it, got promoted to other jobs, until I became responsible for Fourier Analyzer sales for the whole of Europe."

After that, Roger became the director of H-P's Instrument Group for the UK, then general manager for all UK operations. "Then H-P asked me to go the United States to help reorganize and restructure the instrument group. So, in 1987, I came to the U.S. I ended up being the general manager for H-P's instrument group in the western hemisphere and the far east."

Eventually, H-P and Roger parted company and he joined up as V.P. of Sales with a firm called Wiltron that made microwave products. As luck would have it, Wiltron was purchased by a Japanese company called Anritsu and Roger ended up becoming president of sales and marketing for the U.S. part of the operation.



"I did that for about five years and then joined an east coast company called GenRad. Then, I moved to Southern California to work for Genoa, a company making electronic simulators for printers and fax machines. From there I moved to IFR, which had bought the Marconi Instruments company in the UK."



So that sent Roger back to the UK. Full circle? Not quite.

“I agreed to spend a year in IFR’s Wichita, Kansas facility, to do some troubleshooting there. At the end of that year, we moved back to our house in Capitola, CA. That was after the dot com debacle, so it was really hard to find work in the Silicon Valley. In Capitola, I got involved with the senior center in Santa Cruz and a number of other volunteer organizations. We finally decided to sell there and move to Grass Valley.”

I can only say, Capitola’s loss is our gain!

In Grass Valley, Roger, who holds dual citizenship, hooked up with RSVP, then FREED and HelpLine, and finally—at his insistence—with GCCLC.

“I find it challenging when I can help crack problems, like the networking problem we recently had. It’s really a good feeling. I’m also evangelical about computer use. I feel computers should be viewed as easy to use as televisions. I get tremendous satisfaction when I see students coming to classes, stressing out about computers, and then seeing them go away feeling comfortable about their computer.”

Roger’s personal life? There’s not as much of that as Roger would like. He’s too busy with GCCLC and other volunteer work, including being the vice president of the Alta Sierra Property Owners Association. But he and Nancy travel regularly to the UK to visit his three kids and three grandkids there. He confesses that his woodworking shop—the focus of his hobby, as it were—has been idle too long. However, he’s hoping that after living in 25 houses (10 in the last 11 years), this will be the last!

Roger is a man of many talents. He is a graphics and Internet expert—he formats and distributes this newsletter, developed and maintains our website – and does countless other jobs for the GCCLC. He is a key player in our success. We should all hope he never tires of it.

### Tech Tips

*Submitted by:* Mitch Bain

Some file extensions you might encounter:

- AVI - Microsoft movie format
- BAK - Backup
- BMP - Windows bitmap

- DLL - Dynamic link library
- DOC - Document (Word)
- DOT - Word template
- EXE - Executable program
- GIF - CompuServe bitmap
- HTML or HTM - HTML document (Web page)
- JPG - JPEG bitmap
- MOV - QuickTime movie
- MP3 - MPEG-1 Layer 3 audio
- MPE - MPEG file
- PDF - Portable Document Format (Acrobat)
- PNG - PNG bitmap
- PPS - PowerPoint Slideshow
- PPT - PowerPoint
- RTF - Microsoft text/graphics
- SCR - Windows screen saver
- TIF - TIFF bitmap
- TXT - ASCII text
- WAV - Digital audio (Windows)
- WMA - Windows Media audio
- WMV - Windows Media video
- WPS - Microsoft Works document
- ZIP - PKZIP compressed

Have a favorite tip?  
Email it to the editor at  
[publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org](mailto:publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org)

## September Events

No activities in August. Enjoy the Fair!

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### September Seminar.....

**Wednesday, September 28 (1:00 - 4:00)**

**“Computer Projects Focusing On a Photo Slideshow Program and Other Projects”**

**Presented by Jany Dalstra**

Jany will demonstrate the “how tos” of minor editing, pan, zoom, and transition effects along with narration and music. Your families and friends will enjoy these value-added memories!

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### September User Group meeting.....

**Thursday, September 15 (9:00 – 11:00)**

**“Burning CD's Using Windows XP Tools”**

**Presented by Mitch Bain**

**Registration** is still going on for Fall classes. To register call 273-3029 or register on line at [gcclc.org](http://gcclc.org).



## E-Waste Info

Submitted by: Doug Worthy

Did you know that in California alone, there are 6 million old TVs & monitors sitting in homes. They are sitting in garages and closets.

Ten thousand TVs & monitors are thrown away each day in California alone!

In California (the leading state in e-waste laws) a \$25,000 fine can be imposed for illegally disposing of computers, monitors, TVs, etc. in a landfill.

At the end of 2004 it was estimated there were 315 million obsolete computers in the United States.

Be aware; many companies that offer to take your old equipment away for free often sell it to the highest bidder. But if it's disposed of illegally later, the unit could be traced back to you, thereby subjecting you to a hefty fine.

If you would like to pursue this subject further and find specific advice, here's a good Website to check:

[www.ease-e-waste.com](http://www.ease-e-waste.com)

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## GCCLC Completes Comprehensive Database Project

The Learning Center has made astounding progress since its founding in 2000 toward its goal of helping to build a community of computer literate seniors here in Western Nevada County. As recent milestones on the road to excellence, the organization just adopted a new name, Gold Country Computer Learning Center, approved a new logo, published a new brochure, and decided to start an e-newsletter.

Also recently, another important goal has been reached; completion of the development of an integrated database of volunteers, present and former students, and others interested in the GCCLC program.

Some of the credit for this goes to our Webmaster and one of our talented technical gurus, Roger Thornburn (profiled in the issue).

In the past, several databases existed. There was one maintained by Carol Kuhwarth that supported her job to register people for courses and keep historical registration records. There was one maintained by Joan Gootherts to support her need to sign people up for

seminars and user group meetings and record who attended. Karen Pfanenstiel had a list of volunteers. But those databases were not integrated and email addresses and some other data were not up to date.

Roger Thornburn to the rescue! He held a number of meetings with individual database stakeholders and joined everything up, eliminated duplications, corrected information, and created a system whereby all the database users can now get the information they need to do their jobs and, as a bonus, keep the information up to

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**"I think you're spending too much time on the computer. Your fingers move when you talk."**

date. He also developed email systems to distribute the newsletter and enable Council members to send bulk emails to our volunteers with one click of the mouse.

Central to the new database process is Sammie Grib, who is the database "manager" and to whom everyone can now look for correct and periodically updated database information. Sammie is the official repository and distributor for database information. Roger is the technical brains behind keeping it operating, current, and useful.

The bottom line? Progressive management scores again. The Council, the GCCLC's management group, decided to take on this project and fix the database. And fix it they did!

This spirit characterizes the way your GCCLC thinks about progress and the quality of the services it offers to its students. We are here for the long run and for the benefit of our students and alumni. And although we are proud of the progress we have made, we are also committed to becoming better and better at what we do in the future.

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## Volunteers Are Our Most Valuable Resource

It takes a lot of dedicated people to make the GCCLC operate effectively. These are our volunteers and they serve as instructors, coaches, lab monitors and governing Council members—most serving in multiple capacities.

As of the date of this newsletter issue, there were 56 active volunteers.....and the emphasis is on active. They are fully involved. They work hard and spend long hours doing Learning Center work. Forty one are coaches and lab monitors. Fifteen serve as instructors, and seven have non-teaching or coaching responsibilities. A lot of the folks fill several different jobs; many two, some three, some four.

But instructors couldn't teach and coaches couldn't assist without the people who develop curricula, write course manuals, register students, keep the computers running, handle the finances, and arrange for seminars and user group programs. These are the governing Council members. They meet once a month and develop policies, solve problems, and make sure the Learning Center stays healthy.

Speaking for myself as a volunteer, helping the organization to move forward and improve is truly exciting work. We always need good people to help. If

you would like to be a part of this rewarding work, contact Karen at 470-0270 or email [ed2@goldcountrycenter.org](mailto:ed2@goldcountrycenter.org) You can also sign up online at our Website.. We hope you will join us!

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## General Information and Contacts

Website – [www.gcclc.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:admin1@goldcountrycenter.org)  
You can also register online at our Website.

For volunteer information:

Call Karen at 470-0270 or,  
Email [ed2@goldcountrycenter.org](mailto: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](http://www.goldcountrycenter.org/labsignup/calendar.php)



"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](mailto:publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org) or 478-0156."

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