

Bits & Bytes

A Newsletter from the Gold Country Computer Learning Center

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Profile.....

Elinor Sheets: GCCLC's own Hobby Queen

"I was born and grew up in Walla Walla, Washington," Elinor begins. "I left there when I got married at 20." After that, she followed her G.I. husband to Monterrey, North Carolina, and back to Walla Walla. After her divorce, she moved to Sacramento with her parents. "It was in Sacramento that I met my current husband, Frank. I brought a son into the marriage as did Frank. Then we had three children together.....it's kind of a his and hers and ours thing," she says. Then Elinor and Frank were on the move again. "We moved over to Mill Valley, then later to Fairfax, and finally we settled in San Rafael."

Elinor is probably the Learning Center's hobby champ. "I've had a lot of hobbies. I started with water colors. I did a lot of water colors. In fact, my house is so full of water colors, I eventually decided to stop painting." Then came quilting. "I gave each of my kids a quilt and gave a number to friends. When babies came along there was always a quilt to be made." Finally, Elinor did all the quilts she wanted to do and went into wood carving. "After a while I had done all the wood carving I wanted to do, but by that time I had become interested in computers."

"I was one of the original Learning Center volunteers five years ago," Elinor says proudly. She started coaching, and learned even more about computers—enough to start another hobby, genealogy. "I've researched my family both on my mother's and father's side and I've also researched Frank's family. I use the Family Tree Maker program to keep my records and I use the Internet to do research."

"But my most *current* hobby is music!" Elinor says with more than a little enthusiasm. "...And that's Blue Grass music! I'm learning how to play the guitar. I have a teacher and I practice a number of hours every day." Elinor and Frank like to sing duets, go to jam sessions, and attend festivals..... "especially the ones in Grass Valley," she adds. Elinor has even found a way to use her computer skills to help with this hobby. "I use word processing to type up lyrics and chords to songs, and I go on-line to find lyrics."



“But one thing I *really* like about my computer is the screensaver I’ve made with my photos,” Elinor continues with equal enthusiasm. “Any time I’m sitting near my computer I can watch all my photos that come up as a slide show.”

“I really enjoy my work with the Learning Center,” she continues. “Technically, I guess, I’m the Co-Chair of the Council’s Administration group, but I’m really a right-hand girl to Carol Kuhwarth. I do a lot of the scheduling work and I maintain the attendance records for volunteers and students. I’m also the secretary of the Council. I prepare the agenda and minutes for each monthly meeting and distribute them.” Elinor also coaches. “I try to coach some class every semester. One reason I like to do that is that I learn something new just about every time I coach.”

Elinor worked in the telecommunications sector almost her whole life. “I started as a teenager in high school,” she says. “I’ve worked as an operator, employment interviewer, assistant chief operator, service representative, and administrative supervisor in AT&T’s business office. I retired from AT&T.”

One of the most interesting aspects of Elinor’s work with the phone company was with the Telephone Pioneers. “Long term employees were able to join the Pioneers and do charitable work,” she explains. “I was very active in that group. The Pioneers were organized into Councils and the Councils were grouped together as Chapters. I served both as a Council president and Chapter president.” There were 6000 members in Elinor’s Chapter. Being a Chapter president was pretty much a full time job. “Before I retired I had been relieved of my regular business office responsibilities and I was working full time for the Chapter from my office in San Francisco.” Elinor accepted an early retirement offer while she was Chapter president, finished her term, and she and Frank moved to Grass Valley about a year later.

Elinor is sold on the Learning Center. “People say to me, ‘Oh, I really should learn the computer,’ and I always say, ‘Well, you’ve got a perfect place where you can learn under no pressure.’ I do believe that the Learning Center is the best place to learn and that’s what I tell my friends.” Who could ask for a better endorsement.....or a better endorser?

Tech Tips

Submitted by: Mitch Bain

Here are some Web browsing ideas from my **Favorites** folder:

<http://www.goldcountrycenter.org> -- What else? Links to Seniornet.

<http://www.hotsheet.com> -- Start surfing here.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia> -- On-line, open source, encyclopedia.

<http://www.google.com> -- Search on Google; go to Froogle to shop.

<http://news.google.com> -- News.

<http://maps.google.com> -- Maps.

<http://www.epicurious.com> -- Recipes.

<http://www.nytimes.com> -- News.

<http://www.bbcworld.com> -- News.

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com> -- Movies.

<http://www.slate.com> -- On-line magazine.

Remember, don't type the URL directly into your favorites folder. Go to the Website first and click **Favorites > Add to favorites...** That way you can avoid making typographical errors.

Have a favorite tip?

Email it to the editor at

publicity1@goldcountrycenter.org

Printer Paper Quality

By Doug Worthy

When buying printer paper there are a few facts that might be useful for you to know.

Paper is normally sold in 500 sheet packages known as “reams” but high quality paper can be bought in smaller quantities. Prices vary considerably by type and supplier, so you’ll want to shop around.

If you look on the top of the package, there’s a brightness number like 84, 92, 94 etc. This is important if you’re interested in quality printing of your photos or even your text documents. Where does this number originate? Well, it’s the industry standard scale referred to as GE/TAPPI (Technical Association of Pulp & Paper Industry/American).

Your interest in this would be to understand that the higher the brightness number, the more light that is



reflected from the surface, providing better text and image contrast. You'll also find that the higher the number, the higher the cost in most cases.

Paper is also differentiated by weight. Ordinary printer paper is commonly available as "20 pound bond." But if you are interested in producing something that may be handled a lot and has more substance, you might want to experiment with 24 pound paper.

Quite often, you'll not care about quality. If you are just printing text, the lower brightness number and lower weight may be just fine. There's no point in using the more expensive, higher quality paper to print text only. If your photo printing quality is important, you'll want a higher brightness number or maybe even a custom photo-quality paper. You have to decide whether you wish glossy or matte finish.

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*

You should check to be sure you're purchasing the correct paper for your printer, for example, laser jet or ink jet. Be sure to load correct amounts and read your printer manual for guidance.

One good idea is to keep on hand a supply of different types and qualities of paper so you'll be ready to use whatever is needed for each task.

Remember to store paper properly. Keep it away from moisture and keep packages flat in storage. Very long storage of paper is not recommended by many manufacturers, so you might want to ask about the "shelf life" when purchasing.

An interesting statistic is that the U.S. has the highest paper consumption in the world. An estimated 14,000 sheets is used by each office worker every year! Much of this is recycled paper, fortunately.

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October Events

October Seminar.....

Wed., October 26 (1:00-4:00)

"Greeting Cards and other Creative Projects"

Presented by Diane Masini

Diane will show you how to use creative software to tap in to your own talents and skills by creating and/or customizing greeting cards and other projects ... just in time for the holidays. Personalize! Your family and friends will love it

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

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October User Group meeting.....

Thursday, Oct. 20 (9:00-11:00)

"On-Line Banking"

Presented by Bank of America personnel

A Power Point presentation by Bank of America personnel will describe on-line banking as a real time-saver; reduction of paperwork bookkeeping, ease of bill paying, and elimination of postage expense. Security safeguards will be explained.

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Computer Ownership Thoughts

- Part 1

By Doug Worthy

A tremendous number of computers are being purchased these days but one still hears the question "Why do I need or want a computer?" Many times this question is asked by seniors. This is understandable since this technological phenomenon began with a younger generation. The following comments are not meant to "sell" a computer to anyone but are only intended to enlighten those who are considering a computer purchase about all the reasons that might not be readily apparent. Even those who already own a

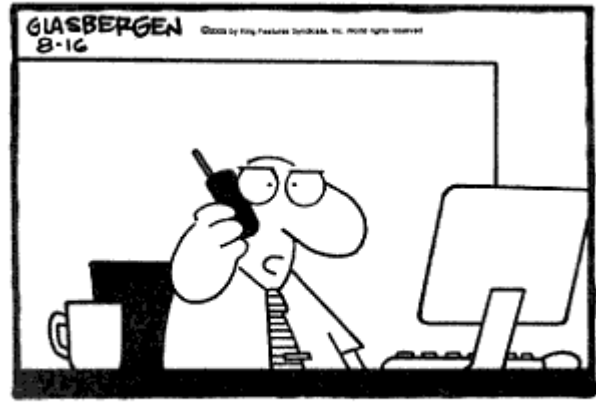


computer and who might say they “only want to send email” may find this information informative.

1. Besides “just sending email,” wouldn’t it be nice to share your photos, receive them from others, enhance your messages with photos and clip art, and learn how to pass along interesting articles you may have read on the Internet? All this (and more) is possible and easy.
2. Perhaps you love cooking and enjoy getting hard-to-find recipes. Thousands of recipes are available on the Internet...FREE. If you have a printer—and they have become very inexpensive—you may copy and print those recipes to save. You can even send recipes (with pictures) to others via email...along with your comments.
3. If you’re a sports fan, a staggering amount of information and up-to-date stats, along with schedules, stories, etc., is available on the Internet. This information can be yours long before your local newspaper can get it to you. You might be impressed enough to decide you don’t even need a newspaper. Much of this kind of information is “archived” for reading at a later time. This is also true for hundreds of other kinds of Internet publications.
4. How about the latest weather? Yes, it’s available for *any* place in the world...often with maps, predictions, and severe weather alerts. This is great for trip planning. You can also get current road conditions, including traffic problems for local areas as well as outlying areas. You can also get free maps and driving directions along with distances and driving time...all printable to take with you! You’ll never have to buy another map. You can actually find out where someone lives (if you don’t already know) and you can print a map from your house to their house, complete with driving directions
5. Maybe you’re a big TV or movie fan? All the schedules are available on the Internet for *your* area. No phone calls to make or TV Guides to buy!
6. You might be thinking...gosh, I enjoy the games and crossword puzzles in my local newspaper. Did you know that hundreds of games are available on the Internet, such as solitaire, chess, checkers, and poker to name only a few? And they are all free.

You can select a particular *subject* for a crossword puzzle, for example. You can even engage in games with others and have a two-way conversation, complete with text and/or sound, while playing.

— **Better Half** Randy Glasbergen —



“I’ll probably be home late tonight.
I’m waiting for my computer
to apologize!”

7. Did you know that you can do your bill paying and other financial transactions on the ever more *secure* Internet. Many institutions offer this as a free service, since it reduces their costs. And you can save money by doing this, too. The newer (and constantly improving) Internet security encryption methods make this very safe. You can renew Certificates of Deposits, move money from one account to another, and get your account statements to print. You can monitor your accounts as frequently as you like, including for the days the banks are closed. You can also contact them by email for questions.
8. Many brokerage firms offer the same advantages that banks do. The biggest advantage is that you will pay a *much* lower commission for buying and selling stocks online. Forty to fifty percent savings, and more, are common. Your monthly statement and year-end tax forms are available to print. You can print your trade confirmation slips. You can email the brokerage with questions. (This sure beats waiting on the telephone after pushing a zillion buttons with no response and getting lost in voice mail hell.) Some firms offer *free* checking privileges for your unused funds, which are drawing minimal interest.



Editor's Addendum:

The Internet has tons of history stuff. Older folks often recall old things.....random memories about their earlier life (at least, if you're like me you do), and it's great to be able to find information about those memories. Are you thinking about the first car you drove? I'll bet I could find a photo of a '49 chevy coupe in less than 15 seconds. The first car I ever owned was a 1948 DeSoto. It took me less than a minute to find a picture of it on the Internet. Do you wonder what ever happened to an actor or other famous person? There are databases on the Internet that will tell you if they died, when, and from what. Old commercials, old songs, etc. are there too. I attended the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan in 1948 and 1949. I recently did a Google search and enjoyed reading about a lot of things that happened and people I knew then.

Part 2 of Doug's article will appear in the November newsletter.

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



"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."

