

WAUC TALK

November 2022

Volume 39 Number 11



WAUC
WISCONSIN ALL-COMPUTER USERS CLUB
Members Helping Members



APCUG
An International Association of
Technology & Computer User
Groups
Wednesday Workshop



**HAVE A
COMPUTER
PROBLEM?**
Call **BRIAN BEHLING**
414-313-3709



December 1, 2022 at 7PM

At Jackson Park Lutheran Church

4535 W. Oklahoma Ave. Milwaukee, WI

All meetings listed below are on Zoom at 7PM except the Luncheon.

December 8: Tutorial SIG

December 13: WAUC Luncheon @ 1 PM

December 15: Question & Answer SIG

December 21: Investment Club SIG

December 22: Smartphone & Tablet SIG



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Calendar

- December: WAUC Annual Holiday Party
- January: Randy Rae presents "Genealogy and Computers. No more paper"



As we close in on the end of the year, WAUC has faced a few issues that I believe we as a team of volunteers have overcome, sometimes with outside assistance.

We are ready for the Holiday Party for our December General meeting. If you need to sign up for bringing something to the party, contact Romaine! The December general meeting will NOT be on Zoom as there will not be a special presentation.

Please share with us, anything we can do to improve the meetings of the club and anyway we can improve. Also, let us know what we can do to recruit new members! How can we market better? How can we reach the public better?

Save yourself \$5 by sending in your 2023 dues before December 31st for \$25. Any dues not postmarked by 12/31/22 will need to pay \$30. Having a hardcopy of the newsletter sent to you remains at \$10 extra.

Have an amazing Holiday Season!

People helping People!


Don Skarda

OCTOBER 2022 TUTORIAL SIG

Those attending were Jim Hempel, J J Johnson, Julia Rice, Louise Bozek, Tom McAndrew, Betty Robinson, Don Skarda, Kathy Schnagl, Terry Harvey, Rita Bruce, John Schwarzmeier, Richard Durand, and Jan Mlagan.

Richard wondered if anyone has used “vertical tabs” in Edge. Rita tried it but thought it would be better if one had a vertical or portrait monitor.

Rita used to have Spectrum internet but has recently changed to T-Mobile 5G internet for \$50 per month.

 She's very happy with it except she's unable to watch television on her laptop and her TPLink plugs aren't working. Don thought it's because they're all 2.4 and her service is 5.0. Don tried it and was able to get all his devices working properly but couldn't maintain a strong signal. He thought Rita should try connecting her television to a Fire stick.

Julia has a large monitor connected to her laptop. She would like to use it for Zoom meetings but she can't get it to work. Don recommends swiping on the laptop. Julia hasn't tried that yet but said that sounded familiar and she will try it.

Jim suggested streaming live television on Windows 10 through Sling TV. It will work on the free version.

We were hoping to find an app that would get through the firewalls of popular newspapers. We tried a Chrome Bypass Extension without success and another website suggested typing, <https://12ft.io/jsonline.com> but that didn't work either.

We watched a YouTube video on unlocked phones. If you can afford to pay for your phone up front, you can save money by searching online for the best price. Often Amazon, Best Buy, or Samsung has sales and will offer great prices.

We watched Rossen Reports on robotexts. So far this year 66 billion robotexts have been sent and by the end of the year it's projected over 147 billion robotexts will have been sent.

Jim found a fabulous price on Microsoft Office Professional 2021 with a lifetime license for \$35.99. This bargain is available from StackSocial.com. Jim and Don ordered it, installed it, and have it up and running.

Next we looked at <https://www.heyitsfree.net/> for free things. We found a free taco at Taco Bell just for using the app, La Roche-Posay Sunscreen is free after completing a signup form. This site also showed big Amazon Deals including a multi plug outlet extender 3 USB ports with phone cradle, regularly \$35.99 for \$9.99. Free Kindle eBooks were offered as well as free computer video games. Saturnalia which normally sells for \$19.99 is free as is Warhammer 40,000: Mechanicus is usually \$29.99 and this week it's free. A few other freebies offered were L'Oreal Age Perfect Eye Renewal, Prada Beauty Perfume, and a Vanity Fair Magazine subscription. This is a site you need to check in with often! One last bargain site is on Facebook, search for “Deals for Moms.” These are always changing too but right now they have half off on canvas monogrammed tote bags, fall wreaths, and many more bargains.


Hey,
it's free!

Terry L Harvey

OCTOBER 2022

QUESTION AND ANSWER SIG

Those attending were Jim Hempel, Richard Durand, J J Johnson, Donna Armitage, Louise Bozek, Jan Mlagan, Terry Harvey, Betty Robinson, Don Skarda, Rita Bruce, Karen Fenney, John Schwarzmeier, Julia Rice, Tom McAndrew, Bill Vlach, Marcia Zientek, and Brian Behling.

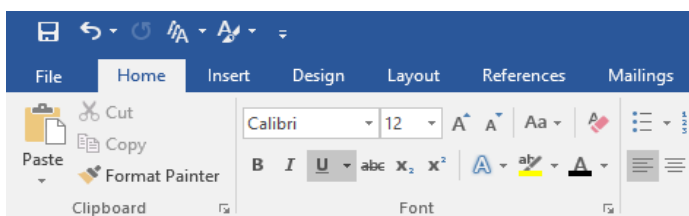
We started with a very important question: What is the most popular candy for Trick or Treat in Wisconsin? <https://www.candystore.com/blog/facts-trivia/halloween-candy-map-popular/> 

Members were asking about the StackSocial.com bargain. Microsoft Office Professional Suite 2021 with lifetime license had been on sale for \$35.99. A number of members were interested but the



price is now \$39.99. Still a major bargain!
We looked around at MS Office a bit; at a few of the included programs such as Word and Publisher and the various ribbons.

Richard doesn't understand the "ribbon" concept of Microsoft Word. MS ribbon is a set of toolbars at the top of the window in Office programs designed to help you quickly find the commands you need to complete a task.



For those that don't want to spend the money, there are also free open source programs. Scribus is a free desktop publishing program similar to Publisher, available for most desktop operating systems. It is designed for layout, typesetting, and preparation of files for professional-quality image-setting equipment. Scribus can also create animated and interactive PDF presentations and forms.

LibreOffice is a free and open-source office productivity software suite, a project of The Document Foundation. It is similar to Word.

If you are going to change your password soon, the professionals are all telling us to change it to a passphrase. A passphrase is a memorized secret consisting of a sequence of words or other text that a claimant uses to authenticate their identity.

Karen uses Outlook and somehow the layout has changed and there isn't any text in any of the messages. Each message only shows who it's from and that it's addressed to her. Brian asked what browser she's using. She's using Edge and suddenly is having a number of computer issues. She rebooted and all is well.

Spectrum is recommending their customers down-

load and install F-Security Suite. I installed it, set it up, and ran the scans. All was well until every time I went to use my computer there were notifications stating, "Your action is required." After doing that a few times I decided to ditch it and stick with Windows Defender.

On November 5th, from 10AM to 4PM there will be free electronic recycling at the Salvation Army, 630 E. Buffalo Street, Milwaukee.

Terry L Harvey

OCTOBER 2022

TABLET/SMARTPHONE SIG

We started the meeting with a question from Richard about an app that he has on his phone. He finds it annoying and would like to remove it. The app on his LG smartphone is called Quick-Memo.

We did some research and found this app is frequently found on LG phones and is described as follows, "The QuickMemo feature allows you to create memos and capture screen shots." We also found it on the Google Play Store where it has a user star rating of only 2.8 out of a possible 5. With so many bad reviews we can understand why Richard wants it removed from his phone.

We found this information on Android Central.



QuickMemo on LG phones is a preinstalled app. Virtually all preinstalled apps are not removable, and they are called "bloatware". If you go to *Settings>Apps* and select the

app and you don't see an Uninstall button, then it's bloatware. If there's a Disable button, then at least you can prevent it from opening into RAM. Disabling it will also uninstall all updates and re-

vert to the factory-installed version, which is typically smaller. But if there's no Disable button either, then you're stuck with it. You'd have to reboot the phone in order to remove bloatware.



Bloatware can come from the phone manufacturer or from your cell service provider. They are usually not harmful, but can be very annoying. I did some research after the meeting to better understand

the reasoning for not being able to uninstall them. I found this interesting article on How To Geek website. It addresses the same issue about other apps you may find unable to remove.

“You can’t uninstall a system app. These are typically apps like the phone, calendar, messaging, file manager, etc. Removing them could make the phone malfunction, which is why it’s not possible without extreme measures. What constitutes a “system” app depends on the device. Sometimes you can’t even uninstall the calculator.” Note, that while you cannot uninstall messaging, you can change the default app that provides this function to another version that can be found in the Play Store.

A disabled app is still installed on the device, but it can’t be opened or run in the background. For practical purposes it’s “uninstalled,” just not technically.

Some time ago, Julia found a way to turn her voicemail off. The way to go about activating/deactivating your voicemail function will vary based on the cell phone service provider, as well as the phone make and model itself. While some phones may allow you to activate/deactivate voicemail manually, your best bet is to contact your service provider and let them know you want it turned on/off. We tried several ways to do this on Julia’s device but she couldn’t remember her password to her voicemail. So we gave her the phone



number to call for her service provider.

The next question had to do with the battery life in Karen’s Samsung Note 9. She is questioning whether she should get a new phone or replace the battery. Lithium-



ion batteries use a reversible chemical reaction to power your cell phone. A rule of thumb in the industry is that your battery will lose about 20% of its capacity after about 500 charge cycles. I’ve seen that figure vary from a low of 300 cycles to a high of a 1000.

Turning off unused services, like Bluetooth for example, will help extend the time your phone stays powered. Dimming your screen brightness and Data Saver mode also help.

Now back to the original question. This decision has two important factors to consider. One, is the price of a battery replacement vs getting a new cell phone. The second is more personal. Are you interested in the latest features? Do you struggle with new phones? Do you like the latest new “toys” to play with?

In the case of her Note 9, we learned a battery replacement would cost about \$70 to \$90 vs a much higher cost for a new phone. Retail prices for all the flagship models are well over \$1000, however we found substantial discounts on unlocked Android phones. If you decide a new phone is the way you want to go, then you will need to decide on the price/feature trade-offs. The smartphone market is divided into segments such as "flagship," "mid-range," or "entry-level" models. Samsung’s flagship range has always been the S series, while it also produces mid-range models in the form of the A-series. Technology like the most advanced screen resolution or camera features are usually found only in the flagship models.

From there we moved on to cell service. The

three major cell service providers, AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon, have nationwide cell tower locations. US Cellular is a regional provider with strong emphasis on the Midwest. All the other cell service providers are known as MVNO's. MVNO stands for "Mobile Virtual Network Operator," and being virtual, that means an MVNO does not own the **wireless** network towers that it uses. They rent or lease them from the big guys. If you are interested, Wiki has a detailed article on them and lists over 100 MVNO's.

For a year, I tried Mint Mobile. It is a highly rated MVNO and uses the T-Mobile cell towers. We took a



quick look at the cell coverage for 4G and 5G. When you really zero in, expanding the map details, it was easy to see

why I got good coverage in the Milwaukee area and no coverage in and around Markesan, WI where I've spent some summer time.

Lesson to be learned – if you are switching providers, take a very detailed close-up look at their coverage map. You should be able to get details down to your own neighborhood coverage.

There was a comment about Google Fi. We found Google Fi is a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) service that provides calls, short message service (SMS) which is also known as text messaging, and mobile broadband using cellular networks and Wi-Fi. As an MVNO, Google Fi operates on T-Mobile and U.S. Cellular networks but is not owned by those companies. Currently, Google Fi only serves customers in the United States.

Another provider we discussed in Spectrum. Spectrum Mobile is a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) that provides access to Verizon Wireless' cellular network.



It's a service that's available exclusively to Spectrum

Internet customers.

We talked briefly about two service organizations that provide a wide range of services to seniors. One of them is Love Thy Neighbor and another is Senior Planet.org affiliated with AARP.



Hope to see all of you at the December Christmas Party on Dec 1st.

VPN

A lot of talk about VPN! Do I really need one?

I've been hearing a lot of discussion in our club about VPNs. I'd like to try to explain what they are in very easy to understand terms, their benefits, possible issues and my person experiences with one. I'm sure there are entire books written about this but I hope to hit the high points and I will provide links to videos on the subject at the end.

"VPN" stands for Virtual Private Network. You have a private network when only authorized parties can participate. It is able to use the public internet that we all know so well by using encryption to keep unwanted people out, while allowing authorized participants to join the private network - the VPN.

Now for a little background. They have been used for many years in large corporations and universities to allow different locations to communicate with their other locations privately while keeping unwanted intruders out. Years ago, corporations used a key fob for remote VPN access.

While at Rockwell Automation, I was given one of these key fobs to use. The fob generates a pseudo-random token code, known as a passcode. This would validate me to confirm that I was legitimate and I was authorized to access the company network. Once the validation is complete, the user is given access. The passcode only works for a certain amount of time -- 30 to 60 seconds. A bit like the two factor authentication now, you had to use the passcode quickly, before it automatically changed to a new number.

Today, you subscribe to a VPN service. Your computer

has VPN client software or app installed on it which enables it to connect securely and invisibly with the VPN server. When you tell your browser where you want to go, the URL is encrypted and sent to the service provider's VPN server. The VPN server then initiates a connection to the target site and securely relays data between you and the site.

So what's different about it and the https that is the beginning of most website addresses now? The https also encrypts the information. The big difference is that the VPN also conceals your IP address – that is numerical address that your service provider assigns to you and gives your location. This doesn't identify your house address, but probably your city or suburb. For me, I live in Cudahy but my IP gives my location as Oak Creek. Not only that, the [VPN](#) also hides the URL information for the site you visit from your service provider, like Spectrum or ATT.

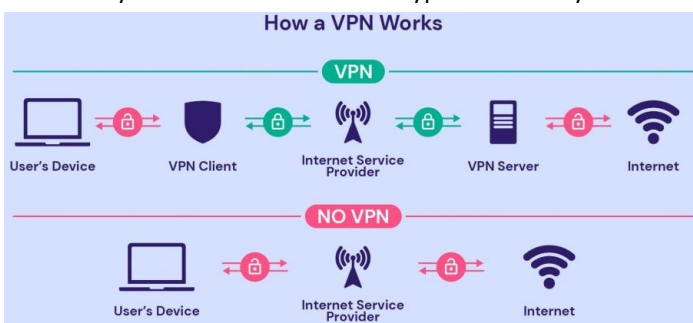
Who might be so ultra-privacy concerned? There are many legit reasons why this might be important. When I was traveling outside the US, it aided me in getting to US websites and to my work internet. Another use might be to access information that is only available in your home country. Various streaming services limit what countries can access their content. So if I was traveling outside the US, I could use the VPN to access my personal subscription to my Hulu streaming account.



More locally, there can be hackers everywhere. Go to a library, pub, store, or any other public place that offers free WIFI and you will be glad to have a VPN to use there.

Some years ago, I was watching a British television series that was carried on the local Milwaukee PBS station. It had a number of episodes and I got interested in it after it had been on quite a while. I was almost caught up with the whole series when PBS stopped carrying the series. I was bummed out. But had this thought. Why don't I use my VPN to make it look like I was in London? It worked. I tuned into BBC and watched the last episode.

So if you want to connect your smartphone or PC to a public WI-FI that does not require password protection, then all data to and from your device that is not encrypted can easily be viewed



or stolen anyone within range of the WI-FI signal. All that data thief needs is some free software that enables “sniffing” around the data being transmitted.



If you are accessing secure WI-FI sites with https and passwords, you are already encrypted and will be safe without VPN. I've used my smartphone a lot in public places and I don't want to make any mistakes, like not noticing if a shopping site is not https. Mainly for the added security, or call it insurance, I use a VPN called Surfshark. It's from a security company based in the Netherlands.

Let's summarize some facts about your surfing.

- Your ISP, typically Spectrum or ATT, can see which website you visit
- HTTPS has become very common and now secures most website traffic
- Your online activity is always being tracked by active pixels and cookies
- Security and privacy become a matter of trust
- IP addresses are assigned to every device.

Now let's look at what a VPN does very well

- Location spoofing
- Combat censorship, especially when traveling
- Encrypting data, VPN's first major use but not so important now

What doesn't VPN do?

- You still need internet; it doesn't replace it.
- It does not protect you from malware and viruses
- It does not provide total invisibility the VPN knows it all

Now for data on the software. According to one review, most VPNs can be installed in about a minute. The longest in the review took 3 minutes, the shortest took 50 seconds

Costs for an entire year ranged from \$39 to \$108. Surfshark is second lowest at \$48. This is a hard one to measure due to special discounts, offers, terms, number of installs, etc.

Besides the price, things to look for are the number of cities and countries serviced by the VPN and the speed of response, types of devices it handles and number of devices.

Reference material for those who yearn to learn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr2-K6AaHNI>
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
app=desktop&v=8x1BJCKwqpl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=8x1BJCKwqpl)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fTxngACsIQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX0ETTUymjw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVPfyO0c_b4


Jim Hempel

November 2022 General Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7pm by President Don Skarda. Treasury Report was given by Bob Banerian.

Announcements were given regarding raffle prizes, discount for club dues, Christmas Party, and monthly luncheon scheduled for the third Tuesday of the Month. Christmas Party signup sheet was passed around so that members could bring a dish to pass and to let the staff know how many would be attending the party.

Club members were told of a procedural change for the Christmas Party. A signup table will be placed at

 the door, so members can be checked off and give their dish to pass to the staff or pay a fee to attend the party and purchase raffle tickets and Bingo Cards.

Club Dues are \$25 before December 30th, \$30 after that, with an additional \$10 fee if you want a hard copy of the newsletter sent to your house.

Newsletter, WAUCtalk is a group project. The club is looking for a newsletter editor to manage the newsletter.

The presentation was given by Bob Gostischa, the topic was, "Is Cyber Security Really Important?".

The basic premise is that cyber thefts are becoming more sophisticated and that we need to take steps

to minimize the thefts. We need to be aware of the different types of phishing, importance of using a VPN to access the internet, backing up our data using a hard drive or thumb drive, using a password manager, ignoring any emails that ask for phone numbers, social security data or bank information and calling the organization directly if you have any questions regarding your online accounts or personal information and lastly cleaning up your phone and PC of excess data and apps that are not needed.

Bob announced that he would be sending a copy of the presentation to member Terry Harvey. Terry would send out an email to all members.

After the presentation, there were some questions revolving around cell phones, where to get one and the importance of getting an unlocked phone. A locked phone has apps, called bloatware, that cannot be removed by the user.

A few members spoke of receiving phishing attack via email for their PayPal account.

Tom Martini

WAUC LEADERSHIP MEETING

WAUC leadership members met via Zoom on November 7, 2022. Present were Don Skarda, Bob Banerian, Rita Bruce, Richard Durand, Terry Harvey, Jim Hempel, Tom Martini, and Julia Rice.

- General Meetings

We discussed the time aspects of the meeting and decided to start at 7 PM with a 15-minute business meeting. The presentation will begin at 7:15 PM followed by questions and answers about the presentation. After a short break, raffle prizes will be drawn and the remaining time until 9 PM will be used to

answer tech questions or discuss club issues.

Raffles at meetings will continue only until all remaining prizes are gone.

Don Skarda will purchase a new \$99 microphone, recommended by JJ Johnson, to use in the meeting room.

Tom Martini will monitor the Zoom participant group from in-person meetings.

- Annual WAUC Holiday party, December 1, 2022

Tom Martini will check in people at the door and collect their food or money contributions.



Bingo cards will be sold at the registration table. Marylyn Schrader will provide holiday music.

- Finance Issues

Bob Banerian confirmed that our annual membership dues of \$50 was paid to APCUG. An annual audit of our finances needs to be conducted in February or March. Two volunteers to conduct the audit will be requested at the January General meeting.

- WAUC Talk Newsletter

We currently do not have an editor for the monthly newsletter. In the interim, the newsletter will be a group effort. The newsletter will be created in Microsoft Publisher. Terry will insert most of the write-ups and graphics. She will then forward it to Tom Martini. Tom will compose page 1 and forward the newsletter to Don Skarda. Don will enter his President's letter and finish up any loose ends. During the process, Jan Mlagan will do proofreading.

-Other issues discussed

The normal election of Officers usually held in November will be held at the January General meeting. Don Skarda will follow up with the church to get a copy of the church key for Romaine as she arrives early to organize the snacks. Club cards will be sent to members who experience

a death or hospitalization of a partner or child living with them. Flowers will not be sent.

We discussed having information at Love Thy Neighbor events, a group that has resource meetings for seniors at various locations throughout the year.

We discussed creating a New Member packet and what it would include.

Backups for Board member positions and to manage groups.io are needed.

Rita Bruce

Steps for Paying

WAUC Dues Via PayPal

Log into PayPal or create an account, may ask for two factor authentication. PayPal will send you a code via text message on Phone to log in. May ask you to do the I am not a robot sequence.

Click on the 'Send' button.

the Send Money box type in:

WAUC2019@gmail.com.



Be sure you mark as dues from yourself!

Next screen, chose the payment type...

Select for Family & friends. That way WAUC will get the \$25 and you will get the fee.

Select how you want to pay....balance or Credit Card?



WAUC: Wisconsin All-computer Users Club WAUC was established to provide an educational forum for people interested in learning about computers and related devices such as smartphones and tablets. WAUC provides these educational program and publications for its embers, as well as providing social and charitable opportunities for the membership. While WAUC is a private club and doesn't share any member information outside the club, we encourage members to interact with other members of the club and to facilitate this we publish a membership directory, an email, and promote via a public Facebook group where we often add pictures of group events and our public website.

WAUCtalk is a publication of the Wisconsin All-computer Users Club. WAUCtalk is a computer club dedicated to promoting and instructing the use of computers by WAUC members. WAUCtalk is emailed to all WAUC membership. Free advertising is available to all WAUC members. We are not responsible for omissions or errors.

WAUC Application for Membership / Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

email _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

What do you want to do with your computer? _____

To join WAUC, please send a completed form along with a check for \$30 to cover dues from January 1st through December 31st 2023

WAUC

% Bob Banerian

P.O. Box 340883

Milwaukee, WI 53234-0883

Paid by: New Member ____ Renewal ____ Check ____ Cash ____

WAUC

% Bob Banerian

P.O. Box 340883

Milwaukee, WI 53234-0883