

WAUCTALK

Wisconsin All-computer Users Club

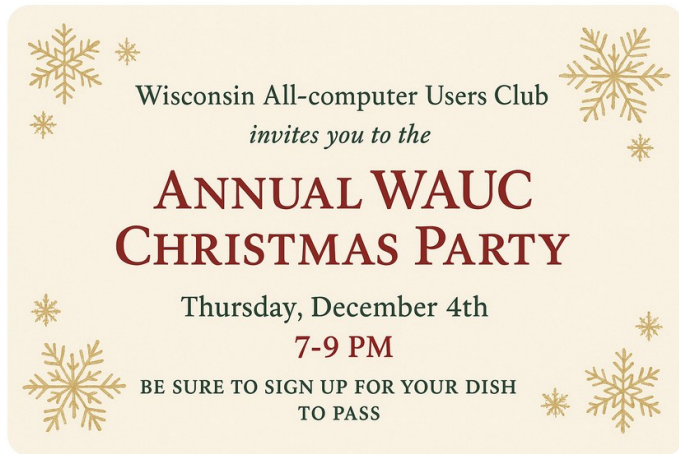
<https://wauc.apcug.org>

Main@WAUC.Groups.io



VOLUME 43 Issue #11

NOVEMBER 2025



Jackson Park Lutheran Church

4535 W. Oklahoma Avenue

December 4th

December 11th

December 18th

December 22nd

December 23rd

January 1st, 2026

General Meeting

Q & A SIG

Smartphone SIG

Investment SIG** 6PM

WAUC Lunch*

WAUC Bingo

ALL SIGS ARE HELD ON ZOOM

<https://tinyurl.com/33xwntkv>

***Meyer's Restaurant**

4260 S. 76th Street

Greenfield, WI

****Wauwatosa Library**

7635 W. North Avenue

Wauwatosa, WI

NOVEMBER 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear WAUC Members,



This month I am doing a short survey. Either before, during or after you read this newsletter, please send me a text or email that you read it or at least some of it. 262-

416-8210 or ddsjr33@wi.rr.com.

Remember to pay your dues before 12/31/25, as the cost is \$25 not the \$30 that starts on 1/1/26. This is an inexpensive organization for dues... think about it \$25 for 365 days = 6.8 cents per day and you get a lot of benefits from WAUC.

If you have not signed up for the Holiday Party on December 4th, please send me an email with what you expect to bring or if you are paying at the door so we know how many are coming.

Be sure to visit our website and tell others! <https://wauc.apcug.org/>

Have a GREAT Thanksgiving! See you in December!

Don Skarda - A PROUD member of WAUC!!!

YOUR President, Wisconsin All-computer Users Club (WAUC) (I serve to help you)

Thank YOU for being a member of this club!! We appreciate you!!

Our club is built on the Mission of "Members helping Members!"



**WISCONSIN
ALL-COMPUTER
USERS CLUB**

**DISCOUNTED MEMBERSHIP
BEFORE DECEMBER 31st, 2025**



Robert J. Banerian, CPCU, ARM

Personal and Commercial Insurance

Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter

Banerian & Associates, Inc.
8626B W. Greenfield Ave. #A-300
West Allis, WI 53214

banerianassoc@milwpc.com
414-259-1396
Fax: 414-259-1398

OCTOBER 2025 TUTORIAL SIG

Those attending were Jim Hempel, Julia Rice, J.J. Johnson, Terry Harvey, Don Skarda, Jan Mlagaan, John Schwarzmeier, Louise Bozek, Margaret Cortez, Kathy Mueller, Richard Durand, Bill James, Rita Bruce, and Brian Behling.

SENIOR PLANET FROM AARP

Senior Planet from AARP offers free

online classes on selling online. Many seniors are downsizing and would appreciate the tips offered in these classes. Selling online isn't difficult but safety is paramount. The classes offer information on marketing and pricing strategies. It's imperative you are comfortable using a computer to navigate websites, search online, and upload and download files. It helps one to understand how to sell in close proximity and also online transactions and shipping processes. Among the tips are to be sure to know the platform's policies, how to create an attractive listing, how to package items for shipping, how to build a positive seller reputation, and safe meet-up guidelines. To keep yourself safe do not give out any of your personal or financial information, do not accept wired funds, cashier's checks, or money orders. Keep yourself informed of common scams such as fake payment notifications and fake check overpayments. A few platforms for local sales include Facebook Marketplace, OfferUp, NextDoor, and Craigslist. Some thoughts for online sales include eBay, Etsy, Amazon, Mercari, and Poshmark. For additional information head over to SeniorPlanet.org.

FOR SALE

Free AI Generator We looked at some of the free online AI generators. They are so much fun. J.J. does quite a bit with AI and he helps us with prompting. AI prompts are the instructions, questions, or commands you give to an AI program to get the desired output. To get the best results, prompts should be clear, very specific, and enough information for AI to understand your intent. For them to be effective, give the same directions as if you were instructing another person. For example, if you went to a resume writer you would want them to have a good grasp on your skills. You would instruct the

writer to include specific information regarding your professional background, the targeted job, and the tone you desire. You would instruct the writer of your education, certifications, past roles, skills, achievements, etc. These are all the same things you would tell AI in your prompts. It's so much easier than you think. Ask it to write a letter to someone and include all the things you want to say. Play with it. Adjust it. Change it. There are many free sites to try. Here are a few free AI generators: Canva, DeepAI, Perchance, Gemini, Adobe, Magic Studio, Copilot, ChatGPT. Additionally, there are many free AI apps.



AI can generate text, images, translate languages, help schedule events, detect fraud, assist with complex scientific and medical research. It can write reports, poetry, letters, verses, create stories, tell jokes, and even offer advice. Some AI apps can even create a video from a photograph. You can even ask for help to make investments.



An AI hallucination is when AI generates false, misleading, or nonsensical information that is presented as factual. These fabrications can range from minor inaccuracies to serious errors, such as a chatbot citing a non-existent legal precedent. Errors, biases, or gaps in the vast datasets used to train AI can lead to incorrect outputs.

**AI
HALLUCINATIONS**

Richard asked if anyone had received phone calls asking for your age and if you have death benefits. No one had. Most people are not answering their phones if they don't know the phone number.



At the end of the meeting, we did play with ChatGPT a little to create a new WAUC logo. This is the prompt we started with: "Create a detailed, colorful logo to include a walking laptop with the name WISCONSIN ALL-COMPUTER USERS CLUB with the acronym WAUC on the laptop screen." There were many suggestions for changes. We started out with a black laptop. We said, "Change the color of the laptop to red" Other prompts were, "Change the background to stark white." "Make the gold colored background inside the circle a lighter gold. "Make the legs a flesh color." "Change the banner style." "Change the screen on the laptop screen

from black to white.” “Correct the spelling to WISCONSIN ALL-COMPUTER USERS CLUB.” “Change the shoes to brown.” “Add a banner to read: MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS.” “Make the banners wrap around the navy circle.” And, many more fine tweaks.

Here are the some of the results:



Which one do you like? What changes would you make?

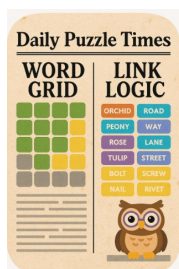
Terry L Harvey

OCTOBER 2025 Q & A SIG

Those present included Jim Hempel, J.J. Johnson, Terry Harvey, Jan Mlagan Julia Rice, Betty Robinson, Louise Bozek, Richard Durand, Don Skarda, Brian Behling, and Bill James.

WAUCTalk comes out on the 15th of each month but no one has yet received it. Don said he sent it out the day prior. Upon checking, it was hung up while sending.

Louise lost her Wordle and Connection games and wasn't able to find them online. She wasn't able to find them again online. Jim went online to nytimes.com/games and we located both games. Because we were there, we had to play a game of Wordle and got the word in six tries.



Jan is receiving a notification on her phone asking for permission to enable 24-7 threat

protection is and it says it's from Verizon. Is it? One way to verify is to Google the exact wording

and see if comes up online. Jan searched and found it was an ad from Verizon and was an additional security protection Verizon sells.



Louise gets a notice from PayPal telling her to login and review her charges for the month. We were all in agreement not to click on links within an email. A safer route would be to go to PayPal.com and login there and make the review.

The question was asked how to close an app. Tap the three lines on the bottom of the screen, then swipe up from the bottom of the screen to the top of the screen. Do that to each app you want to close. If you want to close all the apps, tap on the three lines at the bottom of the screen, then tap the CLOSE ALL button.



Louise has been getting notifications at least three times every day asking her to verify her phone number for her Facebook account. Facebook does ask you to verify your account for security reasons, such as protecting against fake accounts, confirming your identity after suspicious activity, or verifying your account for advertising. They may also ask you if you are using a new device, clearing your browser's cache, or enabling two-factor authentication. But...be cautious of scams that ask you to click on a link.

Facebook advises they will never ask you for your password in an email or send you a password as an attachment.



Always check any correspondence from Facebook or Meta's return address. The addresses Facebook and Meta use will come from the following domains: fb.com, facebook.com, facebookmail.com, meta.com, metmail.com. Make sure the Facebook logo appears alongside their email address. To confirm the email was sent by Facebook, click on your PROFILE PICTURE in the top right of Facebook. Select SETTINGS & PRIVACY, SETTINGS, ACCOUNT CENTER, PASSWORD AND SECURITY, below SECURITY CHECKS, select RECENT EMAILS. You should then be able to verify if there's any correspondence from them.

Richard asked if anyone uses Proton Mail. Jim has a Proton Mail email address from his working days, but

he hasn't used it in years. No one else uses it. Proton Mail was discussed in this month's General Meeting Presentation as a free, safe, private, encrypted email service used by over 100 million people worldwide. If you would like to check it out further, go to proton.me/mail.



We again looked at additional WAUC logos created by AI. J.J. has paid AI accounts that offer far sharper logos and he submitted some of them.

Terry L Harvey

OCTOBER 2025 SMARTPHONE SIG

Those attending were Jim Hempel, J.J. Johnson, Richard Durand, Terry Harvey, Margeret Cortez, Don Gardner, Don Skarda, Louise Dahms, Karen Fenney, Rita Bruce, Betty Robinson, and Brian Behling.

For a change of pace, we started the meeting with a series of jokes, one-liners, and cartoons in a scripted PowerPoint created by J.J. with an audible reading of the slide script.

Terry had the first question and wanted to know if multiple people entered the same prompt for an AI activity, would they get the same results. We tried several examples and several questions and we found the AI gave different answers, very similar in many cases, but different.



Terry had another question related to Photos. When she goes to Photos on her phone, she sees photos in a certain account. She has another account and wants to know how to see those also. We discussed this for a while to make sure we understood the question before trying different actions. Most of the members did not have photos under two or more accounts and a solution didn't pop up quickly. Terry felt like she had changed accounts on the fly but couldn't find where to make the change. As soon as Brian started to clarify the question, Terry remembered how to change accounts. While in the Photos app, click on your avatar then click on SWITCH ACCOUNT.



A question about a VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) service came up next. What is Magic Jack? MagicJack is a VoIP device that allows for landline-style phone calls over a high-speed internet connection. It requires a one-time up-front cost for the device itself and then an ongoing subscription fee for service. Initial device purchases often include a set amount of service, but after that, you pay for renewal plans, which range from approximately \$30 to \$40 per year for basic service. One of its features is that the caller must enter a number on the keypad before the call will go through, thus eliminating spam calls. Keeping your old number is possible and costs about \$30; it is called "porting".

From there we moved on to Hoopla, a library service offering free loans of books, music, videos, audio books, and more. This service is being phased out by many libraries due to increased costs to the library for the service and reduced funding provided to the library for the service. The current average cost is about \$5 per item loaned, almost double the previous cost.



Next up was a question about photos, videos, storage, costs and where they are getting stored on a smartphone. Karen uses an Android phone. She recently started getting messages that she is running out of storage space and is in danger of losing her photos. She didn't understand that because her phone had a lot of memory.



Android automatically stores photos in the app Gallery that comes with all Samsung phones. This app makes use of storage on the

phone itself, or an installed SD card. There is a setting that can be activated to also store the photos to cloud based drive. After some discussion, we determined she was using the Google Photos app to view her photos and the warning was actually about her Google Photos and the Google drive storage capacity. It was getting near its capacity. If this continued, she would need to start paying for more space.

Since she wanted to back her photos up on Microsoft's One Drive, we explained that she should add the Gallery app to her Home screen for



viewing, begin moving her photos from Google drive to MS One Drive. That would open up space on the Google drive and she would no longer get these annoying messages.

Prime Photos

Rita mentioned there is another alternative for

photo storage. If you have an Amazon Prime account, you are entitled to use their photo storage for free. And this is unlimited! You can store as many photos there as you want. Amazon does place a limit on video storage and when a certain fixed amount is exceeded, you would be asked to purchase more space for a monthly fee or annual fee. This is a great benefit for Prime members. But if you decide to end your Prime subscription, your pictures would have to be downloaded to another service or a personal hard drive.

Our discussion then turned to airfares and how to find the best fare. There are a multitude of web sites promising to help with this. It's best to try several of these websites as certain ones may do better with certain carriers.



A search on AI resulted in this response. To find the best airfare, use flexible search tools and compare options, be flexible with your travel dates and destinations, and book at the right time. Start with search engines like Google Flights or Skyscanner, use their features to find the cheapest month or search "Everywhere". Be open to flying mid-week or on less popular days and consider nearby airports for potential savings.

Other tips we came across suggested you book in advance. For domestic flights, the sweet spot is often between 1 and 3 months before you travel, while international flights should be booked between 60 days and 4 months in advance. Prices tend to increase significantly in the two weeks leading up to your departure date. And, as of 2017, all flights to, from, or within the US can be canceled within 24 hours of booking for a full refund. You can book a flight and then rebook if a lower fare appears later.

Rita has heard about Alexa+ and wanted to know

more about it. She has been getting several reminders by Alexa to give it a try. I recently saw an article about this. Amazon just revealed Alexa+, the new and premium version of its virtual assistant that features more generative AI that's designed to do even more things for you. It was noted that the best experience is found on an Alexa device with a screen.



I learned more from a PC Magazine article from Oct 2025. When Alexa+ is available, you'll receive a notification on your mobile device and a welcome email at the

address registered to your Amazon account. Alexa+ will then take you through an introductory process to learn about your preferences and create a profile. You'll also be able to personalize Alexa+, including choosing one of its four masculine or four feminine voices.

You can opt out of Alexa+ early access at any time by visiting your Memberships & Subscriptions page and clicking End Early Access next to the service name. When it exits in beta, Alexa+ will be available for free to Prime members and \$19.99 per month for everyone else.

Finally, we looked at a few magazine articles. The first one has to do with converting from a physical SIM card on your phone to an eSIM. I'm sure you are already familiar with the SIM card, a tiny chip in your phone that connects it to your cell phone carrier of choice. Most modern phones now support eSIM. Instead of a physical card, eSIM is embedded directly into the phone's circuitry and the carrier information is programmed remotely via software. This allows you to try out service on a new carrier without needing to get a physical SIM in the mail or at a store, as well as other advantages. For more details, here is a great article on the subject. <https://www.cnet.com/tech/mobile/how-to-switch-to-esim-from-a-physical-sim-on-iphone-and-android/>



SkipCut.com

Terry provided us with a quick Facebook Reel on removing ads on

YouTube using SkipCut.com. We tried it with a YouTube video and it worked great. Give it a try. The instructions can be found here. <https://www.facebook.com/reel/819008197360108>

HOW TO COPY & PASTE ON ANDROID

Don G mentioned he knows how to copy and paste in Windows but how can this be done on a smartphone. It is very similar to the Windows. Instead of selecting text with your mouse, you select it with your finger. To copy and paste on an Android phone, tap and hold the text you want, drag the selection with your finger to highlight the full content you want. A popup will appear. Tap "Copy" in the menu that appears, navigate to where you want to paste, and then tap and hold the text field to select "Paste" in another popup. Easy Peasy!

We finished the meeting with a trivia quiz on the '60's. Fun for all.

Jim Hempel

OCTOBER 2025 LEADERSHIP MINUTES

Those present were: Don Skarda, Jim Hempel, Julia Rice, Terry Harvey, Suzanne Holcomb, Richard Durand, and Jan Mlagan.

The 2026 calendar has been submitted for final approval.

We need to check with Don Gardner about the purchase of gift cards for Christmas Party Bingo and the special event/New Year's Day Bingo. There should be a total of 24 gift cards, each for \$5.

The question was brought up about whether to just give out the gift card's number and not the physical gift card so we don't have to pay for postage. This will be addressed at a General Meeting.

Terry is having difficulty setting up General Meeting presenters for next year because she is not able to connect with APCUG's presenter chairwoman. If you have any ideas for General Meetings, please let Terry know.

Richard will open the church for the October 30th One-on-One Help session. Those who will be availa-

ble for helping will be Jim, Brian Behling, and Terry. Suzanne will have snacks and coffee available.

Attention everyone, we need new blood in our club leadership! Those who are currently leading the club need help. Please consider running for any of the positions for the next year. We are also in need of topics for the General Meetings for next year. This will be addressed at the November General Meeting.

Don contacted Pastor Fred, and all our requested dates to use the church this next year have been given the okay.

Membership renewal has begun. A notification will be sent out via e-mail to remind members about the reduced dues before December 31st. If you renew before December 31st, the renewal is \$25. Bob Banerian will be available at the Christmas Party to take your dues if you choose to pay at that time. The dues after December 31st, 2025 will be \$30. What a great bonus for those of us who are current members. Also, for those renewing online, PayPal and Venmo are now interchangeable.

The Christmas party will soon be here. The meats will be pulled pork and fried chicken.

Terry asked why we are not using the on-line signup program Sign up Genius since we are a computer group. Don said he already set up an account with them but he found it to be too labor intensive to set up for this year's Christmas Party. Don and Terry will work on this after the meeting. So, we will again be using an Excel sheet to signup for food for the party. Look for it in an e-mail from Don.

The monthly lunch will be on October 28th at Meyers Restaurant, and will be there until further notice.

The Investment SIG is happy to announce that over the past 2 ½ years they have doubled their initial investment. Too bad it's not real money!

The next Leadership Meeting will be November 17th at 7:30. All are invited to attend.

Jan Mlagan



THE UNSUNG HERO: YOUR POWER STRIP

In a world full of smart gadgets, lightning-fast computers, and wireless everything, it's easy to overlook one humble piece of equipment that quietly keeps our digital lives running smoothly—the power strip. You might not give it much thought, but this small, unassuming device plays a major role in protecting your computer, your data, and even your safety. Yet, despite its importance, it's often neglected, abused, and misunderstood. It's time to shine a light on the unsung hero of modern technology: your power strip.

The Mighty Middleman

At its simplest, a power strip is a block of electrical outlets that allows multiple devices to plug into a single wall socket. It's a convenient and practical solution for the average home or office setup—especially near a computer desk where you might have a tower, monitor, printer, speakers, router, phone charger, and lamp all vying for power.

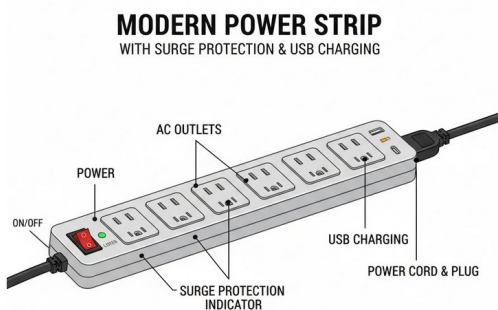
But a good power strip isn't just about convenience. It's also about safety and stability. The best ones include surge protection—special internal components designed to absorb or divert excess voltage from power spikes, lightning strikes, or grid fluctuations before they reach your sensitive electronics. Your power strip acts as a frontline defender between your expensive computer and the unpredictable world of household electricity.

Think of it like an umbrella in a sudden storm. You might not need it every day, but when that surge hits, you'll be very glad it's there.

Why You Should Never Plug Your Computer Directly into the Wall

It's tempting to just plug your computer or monitor straight into the nearest outlet. After all, it seems

simpler—and power strips sometimes feel like just one more cord to clutter your space. But that



simplicity comes at a risk.

The power coming out of your wall outlet isn't always perfectly steady. Storms, faulty wiring, or even nearby appliances turning on and off can cause voltage spikes. These sudden surges can silently wear down your computer's internal components over time or, in severe cases, destroy them instantly.

A quality surge-protecting power strip acts as your computer's shield. It senses when voltage rises above safe levels and redirects the excess electricity safely into the ground, sparing your equipment.

Without that protection, you're leaving your expensive hardware—and possibly your important files—completely exposed.

Not All Power Strips Are Created Equal

It's important to understand that **not every power strip offers surge protection**. Some are simply "extension strips" that provide extra outlets but no internal protection. If your strip doesn't say "surge protector" somewhere on the label or packaging, assume it isn't one.

Look for the **joule rating** on the package—the higher, the better. Joules measure how much energy the strip can absorb before it fails. A basic 600-joule protector might be fine for small electronics, but a computer setup deserves 1,000 joules or more.

You might also see features like indicator lights or reset buttons. These are worth having. The indicator light often shows whether your surge protection is still active—a critical detail we'll come back to in a moment.

The Expiration Date You Can't See

Here's something many people don't realize: **power strips don't last forever**.

Each surge event that your power strip absorbs slightly degrades its internal components. Over time, they lose their ability to provide protection. Unfortunately, there's usually no obvious way to tell when that happens—unless your model has an indicator light that goes out when protection is lost.

Even if you haven't experienced a noticeable power surge, natural aging can also wear down those components. After about **three to five years**, most power

strips are no longer fully reliable. Some might fail sooner if they've been through a lot of power fluctuations.

That means the power strip under your desk that's been there since your last computer upgrade might not be protecting you at all anymore. It could just be functioning as a fancy extension cord, silently waiting for the next surge to strike.

Signs It's Time to Replace Your Power Strip

You should replace your power strip immediately if:

- The **indicator light** (if present) no longer comes on when plugged in.
- It feels **warm or hot** to the touch.
- You hear **buzzing or crackling** sounds.
- You see **burn marks** or smell something odd near the outlets.
- The **plastic housing** has become brittle, discolored, or cracked.

It's **more than five years old**, even if it seems fine. A power strip is relatively inexpensive compared to the devices it protects. Treat it like an insurance policy—something you renew before you need it.

Proper Placement and Use

Even a good power strip can become a hazard if used incorrectly. Here are a few safety guidelines:

1. **Never daisy-chain power strips.** Plugging one strip into another is a major fire hazard. Always connect your strip directly into a wall outlet.
2. **Don't overload it.** Check the wattage rating (often around 1800 watts) and make sure your total plugged-in devices stay below that.
3. **Keep it off the floor.** Avoid placing power strips where they can get wet, dusty, or crushed by furniture. Mount it on a wall or under your desk if possible.
4. **Unplug during severe storms.** Even the best surge protector can be overwhelmed by a direct lightning strike. If you're leaving home during a thunderstorm, unplug your computer setup for extra safety.

Don't cover it. Never hide a power strip under a rug or blanket—it needs ventilation to prevent over-

heating.

These small steps dramatically reduce the risk of electrical fires or damage.

Choosing the Right Power Strip

When shopping for a replacement, here are a few features worth paying attention to:

- **UL or ETL certification:** This ensures the strip meets safety standards.
- **Joule rating:** As mentioned, look for 1,000 joules or more for computer use.
- **Automatic shutoff:** Some models cut power completely when protection is lost.
- **USB ports:** Useful for charging phones or tablets directly.
- **Long cords or rotating plugs:** Make setup easier in tight spaces.

Warranty: Some high-quality surge protectors even offer equipment warranties that cover your computer if it's damaged while properly connected.

A good power strip is an investment—not just in convenience but in peace of mind.

A Small Hero with a Big Job

In the grand scheme of technology, the power strip doesn't get much glory. It doesn't have a screen, a processor, or a fancy logo. But it does have one critical job: keeping everything else safe and powered. Without it, even the most advanced computer could be one lightning strike or power surge away from becoming an expensive paperweight.

So, take a minute to glance under your desk. Check your power strip's age, condition, and rating. If it's old, replace it. If it's overloaded, reorganize it. Treat it with the same respect you give to the computer it protects.

Because while it may never get the credit it deserves, your power strip truly is the **unsung hero** of your digital world—quietly working to keep the lights on, the files safe, and your tech life running smoothly.



WAUC: Wisconsin All-computer Users Club, WAUC was established to provide an educational forum for people interested in learning about computers and related devices. WAUC provides educational programs and publications for its members, 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 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. WAUC 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 (\$15 after July 1st) to cover dues from January 1st through December 31st, 2026.

WAUC
% Bob Banerian
P.O. Box 340883
Milwaukee, WI 53234-0883

First Class



TECH MADE SIMPLE—FOR EVERY GENERATION