

SCA Computer Club notes

Classes for the Month of Apr



April showers bring
May flowers

To enroll, log into the website at <https://computer.scaclub.org/>. Go to Calendars and select Classes/Events. Click on the class you want to take and under "Action", click on "**Enroll**". (Be sure to check the date as there may be multiple offerings of the class). If you need to cancel your enrollment, please log back in, select the class again and click on "**Drop**". All classes are FREE to Computer Club members in good standing and are geared for **beginners** unless otherwise indicated. A member can take any class as many times as desired. **IMPORTANT:** You must have your **SCA Resident ID** with you to check-in at the **Monitor desk** AND AGAIN in the **front of the Classroom** to ensure you are enrolled on the day of the class. Check-in will begin 20 minutes before the scheduled class time. If you are late, you may be bumped from the class by someone on the waiting list.

If you've recently joined our Club we highly encourage you to attend the **New Member Orientation** class to familiarize yourself with our Club's activities. Learn how to sign up for classes, schedule a house call, volunteer to be a monitor and more.

Photoshop Elements: Do you take pictures with either a digital camera or a smart phone? Learn how to organize and edit your pictures. This hands-on class for both Mac and Windows users gives a basic introduction to Adobe Photoshop Elements.

Pages for Mac- Part 1: This class will provide the basics of using Pages to create documents and perform simple task like setting margins and indents, typing, dictating, cut, copy and paste functions, font selection, size and color. We will also cover creation of bulleted and numbered lists and paragraph formatting basics.

Pages for Mac- Part 2: This class will get into the insertion of text and graphic elements and the options for integration into the document flow. The concept of flowing text between distinct portions of the document will be presented in detail. ***A basic understanding of the operation of Pages is prerequisite for this class.***

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Introduction to Windows 11: New to Windows 11 or wondering if you should upgrade? Learn some basics before you do, or become more familiar with Microsoft's newest operating system (OS).

Join us on Wednesday, Apr 12th at 1:00 pm in the Delaware Room to hear Dan Berc, NOAA meteorologist explain what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) does and how it impacts our lives. All eligible SCA residents in good standing may attend and a \$50 gift card will be raffled off to those in attendance for the entire session.

Correction: Last month's Newsletter published the Monitor required shifts for eligibility for the annual luncheon as a "minimum of ten (12) shifts per year". Confusing, right? It should be **twelve (12) shifts**. Thanks (Gary H.) for the typo catch and for reading the Newsletter.

Special Topics

Special Topics classes meet on a weekly or monthly basis. We invite ANY Computer Club member who is interested in learning more about a specific product/application or a specific topic to join in the discussions. All groups meet in the computer classroom. Participants ask questions and discuss various topics at each session.

If you are an Apple user, attend *Apple Talk* that meets **monthly** to investigate Apple products. Did you recently buy a Mac, an iPad or MacBook Air? Do you have questions regarding specific Apple products or applications? Sit in on this month's meeting on **Saturday, Apr 8 from 10 AM - noon** and see if this is the group you have been looking to join.

Computer Talk meets **weekly from 9 –10 AM** every **Thursday** and is designed as a "question and answer" session. Can't figure out how to do something? Do you have a question regarding a specific product or application? This group is for computer related discussions and not limited to any specific product. Bring your Android, Apple, Chromebook, Windows, etc. questions and we'll try to answer them. Please don't ask how to replace your garbage disposal or fix your washing machine. New members are always welcome.

Photoshop Elements Advanced Topics: Enhance your ability to work with digital photos. Monthly topics build upon skills learned in the Photoshop Elements class. These have included enhancing photos by adjusting coloring and lighting, removing imperfections and unwanted objects, clearing haze, and combining photos. Some are simple fixes and others make use of the power of adjustment layers. Topics are repeated periodically, depending upon interest. Meets on **Friday, Apr 28 from 9:30am -11:30am**.

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The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently adopted its first rules focused on scam texting, which has been an increasing problem of scam text messages sent to consumers. The intent is to target and eliminate unlawful text messages and requires cell phone providers to assist in doing so. Providers should maintain a database of phone numbers identified as numbers that should never make an outbound call to eliminate spam messages.

People can report scam text messages to the FCC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov) or report the sender of any scam texts by forwarding the texts(s) to 7726 (or "SPAM"). Doing so will allow your phone carrier to investigate and take action to stop the sender from spamming you and other customers.

In the 4th quarter, 2022, in the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise NV metro area the top 5 fraud categories were imposter scams, online shopping and negative review, prizes, sweepstake and lotteries, telephone and mobile service and Internet Services. The top 5 other categories included credit bureaus, banks and lenders, auto related, debt collection and credit cards.

Scammers try to get one to click on links in text messages by promising free prizes, gift cards or offer low or no interest credit cards OR they say they've notice suspicious activity in one's account or claim there is an issue with a payment or they make even send a fake invoice for a purchase you didn't authorize or make, or they send a package delivery notification. These are all attempts to obtain your personal identity information, username or passwords, or financial information. **DON'T FALL** for it. If the message is from a company or banking institution you do business with, contact them through a legitimate number or website you know is real to inquire about the message you received.

Do you use a cell (mobile) phone, like an iPhone or an Android phone?

Just about everyone we know uses some type of cell/mobile phone these days. Many have opted to get rid of their home telephone (e.g. land line) and just use their mobile phone to call others. We bet a lot of you use your cell phones to do more than just making telephone calls, right? Many use their mobile phones to email or text others and some use them to make FaceTime or video calls to stay in contact with family members. They are handy little devices for communicating, but did you know that they are capable of doing so much more? Here are some things you might like to try (or not):

- Need more light? Try turning on the flashlight. Ever find yourself needing to read something on a sales advertisement, or a book/magazine, etc. when there's not enough light or when it is dark in a room or outside? If you have the Siri or Google Assistant app, you can just invoke their wake word and then say "Turn on the flashlight". And now you can see better. Works great when you drop that earbud under the couch in the living room and need to find it too.
- Do you use a calendar on your mobile phone? Many folks do, to keep schedules straight so they don't miss their many club meetings. How about when your friend wants to meet for lunch next Wednesday or when the Doctor's office calls and tells you they can get you in next Friday, instead of the middle of next month? You definitely want to put that on your calendar so you don't miss it, right? Say "Hey Siri" or "Hey Google", "add Dr appoint next Friday at 2pm" or "add an event called lunch meeting with Joe next Wednesday at noon". It's as simple as that. The other way to add an event or reminder is to open your calendar app, select the date and time and type in what the title/subject is. Using the voice commands seems so much easier.
- Do you find yourself running late to the morning Club meeting because you are enjoying your coffee and catching up on emails? Have a 9am appointment with the hairdresser on Eastern Ave for which you do not want to be late? Set a timer. Again, using your voice assistant, simply say "Set a timer for 20 minutes" to remind you to get ready for your meeting. Or "Set a timer for 30 minutes (to leave for hair appointment) and call it Hairdo." Also, did you know that any of your Amazon Alexa enabled devices can also help with timers, quick math and other things for which you might normally just think your phone can do?
- In a club meeting and the person sitting next to you has their phone ring off in that loud ringtone? Don't be that person. You can use the Do Not Disturb setting on you phone before the meeting starts or just say, "Siri" or "Google Assistant", "Silence my phone".
- OK, ever hear someone's Apple Watch start talking in the middle of a conversation or meeting? The person says, "Aw come on. I didn't ask you anything". Well, even though the Tech companies tell us their devices are not always listening for the wake word, one might find that they accidentally triggered the word or said something similar to "Siri" or "Hey Google" and guess who is listening? If that happens to you, simply tell your watch (or other device) "That wasn't for you" when it comes on accidentally. And remember, you can also go through your Amazon Alexa recordings to delete any voice clips that didn't involve Alexa, or any recordings you don't wish to retain. In today's world, technology does a whole lot more than just let us make/take a phone call when we are away from home.

Things you might like to know (maybe)

Do you use Microsoft Outlook (on Windows?) for your email account? If so, be sure you've updated your email client. A zero-day vulnerability rated 9.8 out of 10 (meaning its both dangerous and easy to exploit) was recently discovered, allowing a hacker to access one's network. A patch is available in the latest Outlook update, so be sure you update your app immediately.

Go to the "*File*" tab, select "*Microsoft Account*" from the pop-up menu, and click on "*Update Options*". Now select "*Update Now*".

What is CPU Cache Memory? It is really fast memory. Your computer has many types of memory, like primary (think hard disk or SSD) that stores the bulk of your data, such as your operating system (OS) and programs. You also have random access memory (aka RAM) which is faster than primary storage but is only for short term storage. Your program uses RAM to store frequently accessed data and that is what makes it fast. But the fastest memory is known as CPU memory cache, which operates between 10 to 100 times faster than RAM.

So how does it all work? Well, programs and applications are a set of instructions that are interpreted by one's CPU. When you select a program, the instructions are sent from your primary storage to your CPU. The data *first* gets loaded into the RAM, then sent to the CPU and this is where cache comes in. There is a memory controller that takes the RAM, sends it to the CPU cache, which then carries out the back and forth data (within the CPU).

CPU cache is divided into *three* "levels" (e.g. L1, L2 and L3). The memory hierarchy is according to speed and thus, cache size. L1 cache is the *fastest* and holds the data the CPU most likely needs to complete a task. There is no standard for L1 cache and its size depends upon the CPU. L1 memory cache is typically 100 times faster than your RAM. Gaming computers are more likely to have a higher amount of L1 cache, (e.g. 1 MB) but that is also very expensive and not needed for what most of us use the computer for (e.g. email, surfing the Internet, creating documents and spreadsheets, saving photos, etc.)

L2 cache is *slower* than L1, but bigger in size. While L1 might be measured in kilobytes (KB or MB), L2 is measured in megabytes (MB). And although L2 cache varies, it is typically between 256KB to 32MB. L2 cache is typically around 25 times faster than your RAM.

Back in the day (*you remember, right?*) L3 cache was found *on* the motherboard of your computer. But nowadays, it can be massive, with some CPUs featured 32MB or even 96MB L3 cache (like in AMD's Ryzen 7 5800X3D CPUs). But even as L3 cache is the largest, it is also the *slowest* cache memory unit that resides on the CPU. Today's modern CPUs include the L3 cache on the CPU itself, while the L1 and L2 cache exist for each core on the chip.

So, now that you know all this, just how much CPU cache memory is needed? As cache memory design is rapidly evolving, generally the more, the better. Remember, data flows from the RAM to the L3 cache, then to the L2 and finally to L1. So when a processor is looking for data to carry out an operation, it will first look in the L1 cache. If it doesn't find it in the L1 cache, it moves on to L2 and lastly L3. The time it takes for all this to work is referred to as *latency*. Latency decreases as computers become faster and more efficient. You might have heard that if your computer is slow to respond, try clearing your cache. Clearing one's cache and cookies may be helpful if the computer is running slowly or if an app is wonky because it removes temporary files.

Keep in mind though that CPU cache size and speed, although important to the overall operation of your computer, should *not* be the determining factor when buying a new computer. More is faster and better, but the number of cores in the CPU and clock speed, etc. are also important. Remember, think about what you intend to use your new computer for.

Things you might like to know (maybe) continued

Do you have a personalized voicemail that you use so you don't have to answer every call? The FTC just put out a warning that scammers are now using artificial intelligence to clone people's voices. All that information about how great artificial intelligence is for us, but now we have to worry about being taken advantage of?

Apparently, hackers can use one's voice to access voice-protected accounts or scam your relatives and friends into thinking that you are actually calling them. To avoid this from happening, the FTC recommends that you delete any outgoing voicemail message that uses your actual voice and replace it with a generic (robotic) voice. Also, when answering phone calls from numbers you are not familiar with (not advised, but if you do) don't immediately say "hello". Why? For the same reason; scammers can record your voice. Instead, stay quiet and wait until the caller initiates the call. If they don't, simply hang-up.

And if you are ever unsure of a call a friend or relative who left you're a voicemail (especially if they are asking for money) do yourself a favor and call them yourself to ensure it was really them. Stay safe, stay aware. For every action we take to try to reduce our risks from scammers, it seems that more come along, each more sophisticated than the previous ones.

Another new tax scam? Do you file a Form W-9? If so, be careful. Emails circulating supposedly from the IRS (sent from the "IRS Online Center") contains an attachment that is suspiciously being identified as malware. The attachment size is suspicious (548 MB) as most genuine Word documents are not 500 MB or greater). If one opens the document anyway, a message appears stating the "document is protected and previewing is not available for protected documents, so it instructs one "enable editing" and "enable buttons" to preview the document". Doing so will result in Emotet being downloaded to one's system. Emotet is **a kind of malware originally designed as a banking Trojan aimed at stealing financial data**, but it's evolved to become a major threat to users everywhere. Remember, if unsure about emails or attachments to emails you receive, take a moment to ask yourself if you are sure that opening it is safe. If there is any doubt whatsoever, delete the email or refrain from opening the attachment. Always keep whatever system you are using updated and use some type of anti-malware or anti-virus program too.

And while we are identifying some of the latest scams, if you are an Apple user, beware. Phishing emails claiming to be from iCloud Support have surfaced indicating one's iCloud account is/has been compromised. One is asked to click a link to immediately change one's Apple ID and password. The link takes one to a very real looking Apple Support's official website. Don't fall for it. One's Apple ID is what allows one access to everything, e.g. personal iCloud Photo Library, Notes app, files stored on one's iCloud Drive, etc. It also gives access to Find My (app used to find the location of all one's devices (and even your family's devices if they are shared)). It gives access to Apple Pay and your debit and credit card information as well. Worst case scenario is that hackers could remotely wipe any of your devices, intercept your messages and get everything in your iCloud backups. Scary, right? Don't panic. Take a moment to think what we constantly remind you of doing. Keep your devices up to date (installing some type of antivirus software), think before arbitrarily clicking on unknown emails and attachments in emails, clicking on links to websites, checking a website's URL to ensure your communication is encrypted before passing from your browser to the website's server, using two-factor authentication, etc. Although nothing is 100% infallible, taking precautions as suggested, lets you know you've done everything you can to be safe online. Keep up the good work!

Useful things you may want to know, or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

that we made up ourselves

Q. I use my cellphone for everything now and routinely download new apps that get my attention to try something new. They can be productive apps or just entertainment apps. I read the reviews (to affirm my decision to try one) or move me to look at other similar apps (since there are so many of them to choose from). How do I know the reviews are legitimate and not just something the vendor is putting up to push their product?

A. Great question! Wish we had an answer. We do know that a United Kingdom (UK) consumer group, Which?, recently analyzed close to 1 million app reviews and found that at 25% of Google Play Store and 17% of Apple's App store health and fitness apps raised red flags. They surmised that one should be on the lookout for too many perfect five (5) star reviews, clusters of great reviews delivered within hours or days of one another and extremely short reviews that add little to the conversation. Another company, Fakespot Inc., that analyzes fake reviews, found that in 2020, as many as 42% of Amazon reviews were phony. Other things to look for in reviews are typos, duplicate reviews and short responses. They recommend checking the web for reviews outside of the app store on other sites you trust, if you are not sure whether or not the reviews are fake. Don't be fooled into making a purchase or downloading a malicious app based upon fake reviews you've read. Let us know if this helps.

Q. I recently updated to Windows 11 on my laptop and I also have Windows 10 on my desktop. I just wanted to say that I use Snip & Sketch to capture screen shots of things various websites (e.g. pictures of clothing, garden tools, kitchenware, etc. that I'm interested in) so I can research and compare them in other websites. That way I don't have to go back and forth between them. Why did they change to screen capture tool in Window 11 (renamed it Snipping Tool) and is it better?

A. Another good question, but we don't know why Microsoft did that. What we do know is that if you use either app (Snip & Sketch or Snipping Tool), an emergency security update has been issued because of a serious bug in the utility was recently identified. Apparently when cropping an image, the tool does not properly remove the cropped image data when overwriting the original file, causing the original data to be retained (even after the image has been cropped or edited). So if a user share a picture of something sensitive (think credit card information with its number redacted from the cropped image), it may be possible to partially recover the original photo. Hopefully your normal Microsoft Windows 10 or 11 security update will take care and update your program, but to be sure, simply go to the Microsoft store, sign into to your account, and go to your Library. You can see there if you have any updates, by clicking on "Get Updates". If your Snipping Tool or Snip & Sketch do have updates, you can update it there which will automatically update your PC. If you do so, take an extra step and check your Windows Defender app to ensure it is also current. Thanks for asking the question.

Q. Is Outlook email safe to use? My son told me to quit using it but I have done so for years without any issues. He want me to pay for a program called Skiff that will set me back close to \$150/yr., which he doesn't offer to pay for and I cannot afford.

A. Perhaps the question you should ask your son is, Why?, especially if you haven't experienced any issues with your current email provider. There are many free email providers (in addition to paid ones) and even

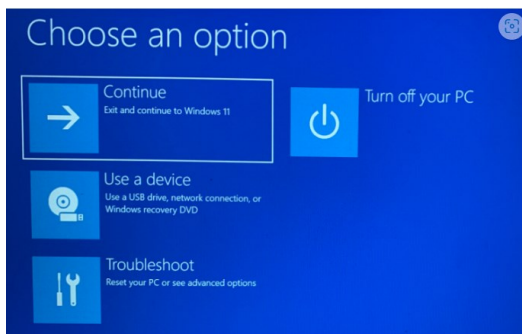
Useful things you may want to know, or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

that we made up ourselves (continued)

even Skiff has a free service available. But why change if you don't need to? Outlook is used by many, along with Yahoo, Gmail, ProtonMail, AOL, etc. But if you continue to use your Outlook email, you need to update it immediately. Apparently an exploit has been identified by Microsoft that could allow a hacker to access one's network for further attacks or just for observation purposes. The latest Outlook update provides a patch for this recent vulnerability. To manually update you can press the File tab and select your Microsoft Account from the pop-up menu and click on "Update Options", then choose "Update Now". We'd be interested in knowing whether you decide to switch or stay with Outlook as your email provider and why, so let us know.

Q. I routinely re-start (reboot) my PC and I periodically shut it down and I haven't had any issues with it for years. But my neighbor told me I should really be doing a "shift shutdown" now and then and while I think he's smart and everything and trying to be helpful, honestly, I've never heard of a "shift shutdown" before. What am I missing?

A. It's nice to have helpful neighbors, but it's always good to question unsolicited advice before just jumping in and doing something because "they said so". In this case, your neighbor's advice might be a good thing to try. Many of us simply reboot our PCs to fix problems or to just as a matter of habit, to keep everything up and running (and it works). When one "restarts" one's PC, the PC goes through a process that saves some of its memory (RAM). This helps the computer to start up faster when it's turned on again. Rebooting can be either a hard reboot or a soft reboot. Pressing and holding the Power button to physically turn off the computer and then turning it back on after a short time period is a hard reboot. Using Ctrl + Alt + Delete at the same time to reboot is considered to be a soft reboot (meaning your system restarts without losing any power). But restart and reboot are used interchangeably but are really two different things. Restart means a reboot when the computer operating system (OS) turns off all programs and ends all pending input and output operations before conducting a soft reboot. Getting back to your question, a shift shutdown is essentially a restart in that



it wipes the slate completely and fully closes all processes and apps AND clears the RAM completely. To do this, hold down your Shift key before you hit Restart and keep holding it down until the PC powers down. When it restarts you should see a screen like the one on the left. Select "Continue" so you can load normally. This can fix many issues you can't fix with a regular reboot.

Sign up for our new Windows 11-Introduction class being offered in April. Check the calendar and enroll. There is a space limit of 12 students (because currently we have Windows 11 on only twelve (12) computers in the classroom). If you are considering updating from Windows 10 to Windows 11, or recently updated to Windows 11 and want to find out about some basic capabilities, then join us.