



Puget Sound Computer Learning Center

Where skilled volunteer seniors teach seniors to use, enjoy computers

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By PHIL SCHEIER, Editor

More seniors turning to computers for help, services, info
**PLAN TO BOOST U.S. SENIORNET LEARNING CENTERS
ANNOUNCED AT NW REGIONAL CONFERENCE HERE**

With increasing online services available to help seniors easily get information fast for living, health, financial and other needs, the nationwide, non-profit SeniorNet Learning Centers has launched a major expansion to reach out to more seniors, particularly those in low-income areas who otherwise might not have computers to access this help.

KRISTIN FABOS LIVINGSTON, CEO of the national non-profit SeniorNet Learning Centers based in Santa Clara, CA, outlined the project at the two-day Northwest Regional Conference held here Oct. 27-28 at the Westminster Chapel in Bellevue. The conference, the first of its kind in this region, was sponsored by our SeniorNet Computer Learning Center of Puget Sound. PAST PRES. HELEN HESKETH who organized and headed the first-ever regional conference, welcomed the almost 100 participants, including members from Oregon, and introduced the speakers, including those conducting special workshops.

To speed up the expansion project, Livingston said, additional experienced staff has been hired, including regional representatives.

"The SeniorNet organization is considerably aided by some 5,000 volunteers nationwide, including 97 in this room," she added. All local SeniorNet learning centers are organized and operated by volunteers. The only paid staff to coordinate national operations and provide needed assistance is at national headquarters. There are 227 SeniorNet Learning Centers nationally, with a total membership of 25,000.

Livingston also cited opportunities for the newly-launched RTV (Retired Technical Volunteers) tech group for those with some knowledge of computers. A nationwide drive is underway by SeniorNet for retired seniors with computer savvy to put these skills to work in behalf of non-profit groups. Current SeniorNet members signing on will receive a year's free national membership. Non-members signing on will receive free year's national membership. The immediate goal, she said, is to sign up 500 RTVs by Thanksgiving, with many already signing up with the local SeniorNet Learning Center based here.

Other speakers included CHERYL REED OF AARP, who said seniors particularly are being targeted by scammers both online and offline. Describing AARP's Fraud Fighter Program, she warned that people over 50 are especially vulnerable and account for over half of all fraud victims.

Wrapping up the historic two-day regional conference, Hesketh thanked the participants, with a special appreciation for the many volunteers who worked behind the scenes for many weeks for the first-ever two-day conference. There was a drawing with Hesketh reaching into a hat for the lucky winners of the many gifts, including software.

Other speakers in order of appearance at the many programs included:

JOE HESKETH, local instructor, who discussed the SeniorNet Website and Leadership Exchange. ATTY. RICHARD SCHENKAR, discussing facts on health and wealth available online and how to find the information.

BOB BALSLEY, curriculum coordinator and instructor, discussing the importance and varieties of backing up documents, joined by KEN CRANDALL, facilities coordinator.

JILL MCLEOD, former principal of Phantom Lake Elementary School which hosts the SeniorNet classroom, and now director of the Early Childhood Education for the Bellevue School District, speaking on "How Seniors Learn and Tips on Teaching."

KEN CRANDALL, whose discussion on Smartboard Basics was presented at the classroom located at the school. The following day, he described "The Many Faces of Google," the popular computer search engine.

JOHN WISE and HAL MOZER, both instructors, conducted a discussion on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), along with demonstrations on techniques using Palm Pilot and MS Pocket PC software.

GORDON YOUNG, instructor, gave a demonstration on editing photos in Microsoft Photo Story 3 and Digital Image Suite.

RAY HANKIN, SeniorNet Western Regional Consultant, spoke on Learning Center Leadership techniques.

Suggested by National HQ. as 'Number One in country'

VISITOR TO SENIORNET HERE PLANS SIMILAR COLORADO CLASSES TO HONOR GRANDFATHER

Because his grandfather did not have the opportunity of learning how to operate computers in the unique way the all-volunteer SeniorNet teaches fellow seniors, a Denver area grandson, visited here recently to see how it is done. His hope, DAVID COCKREL of Boulder, CO, says, is to launch a similar group in his area. Cockrel, president of Who You Should Know, LLC, traveled here to our classroom at the Phantom Lake Elementary School, and met with then PRES. ADELLA GRANGER, and then VICE PRES. DELORES DAVIS.

When Cockrel checked with national SeniorNet headquarters in San Francisco for information, he was urged to visit the SeniorNet Computer Learning Center of Puget Sound "as the Number One such center in the country."

He sat in on several classes, chatting with instructors HAL MOZER and GORDON YOUNG, and asking questions. Cockrel acknowledged starting up a SeniorNet is a daunting task in finding volunteers, computers and a host site.

But this determined young businessman with a dream to honor his grandfather, is pushing ahead with his goal of a SeniorNet group in his area to also serve other seniors with computer training. In a note to Granger, he wrote: "Thank you for a terrific visit! It was a pleasure to meet you, Delores and the rest of the instructors. You should be extremely proud of the wonderful center that you all have put together. Kathleen Sullivan and I were extremely impressed with the terrific learning environment you all have created. You truly are a model for all centers to strive for. "

EASY DRIVE-BY REGISTRATION NUMBER PICK-UP DEC. 1 TO MAKE SIGN-UP EASIER

There is a new time-saving twist for the next class registration Thursday, Dec. 1, from 10 am-Noon, at New Hope ministries Church, 15700 NE 4th St., Bellevue. It will feature a new easy drive-by pickup starting at 8:30 am, of a registration number to avoid or reduce waiting in line. When students get their registration number, they will be given an estimated time to return when the number is expected to be called. According to REGISTRAR LOUISE FLORA, "This will allow you to leave the grounds, grab a quick breakfast, and return at the appropriate time to sign up for the many computer courses being offered."

She added the catalog will be mailed out in mid-November with all details, and will be online at the same time. Flora urged, "Go to the web site www.seniornetps.org for the latest information." Even though Fall 2005 classes still have many weeks to go, she added, it's almost over. The only class available before the new term is the free single-session Basic Basics of Computers on Tuesday, Nov. 1 – 1:00 – 3:30.

SeniorNet of Puget Sound offers classes for the Winter/Spring 2006 semester of senior computer learning. "We continue our emphasis on the 'Core Courses' for Windows XP. This prepares students for classes such as Word Processing using Word, Photo Editing using Adobe Elements 3, Scanning, Burning CDs, and Where is My Stuff? In addition to these traditional courses, we continue our free Open Lab on alternate Tuesdays, Flora said.

FRIENDLY (WOULD WE BE ANYTHING BUT?) TIP TO GET RECORDS FOR QUICK GETAWAY

As *The New York Times* writer Damon Darlin put it in a recent article:

"What is the first thing you will grab from your home if your house floods, catches on fire or comes tumbling down in an earthquake? Family photos? The pets? The Hummel figurines? "

It should be, after everyone is safe, your financial and medical records, Darlin stressed. These are what you will need to rebuild your life after a disaster. Following months of natural disasters with

hurricanes, flooding, woods fires etc., firm planning is needed, and for computer users, it is fairly easy. It can usually be done in a weekend afternoon. For SeniorNet members, it should be easy.

Before you have to face this type of emergency, collect and store all your vital data on either floppy disks or on CD-RW disks, make copies, and store them in a safe place for quick retrieval when a fast getaway is a must. Also, store copies in your fireproof safe deposit box at your bank. Copying important documents is easy using low-cost scanners. Many savvy folks also work up a listing of their bank accounts, policies, numbers, companies, addresses, medical records, dates, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Then, this information set up on the computer, is saved to floppies and/or CD-RW, or even external hard drives. The point is to have it all handy in one spot to grab and run.

Just about everyone has vital documents in piles of papers, documents, dresser drawers, desks, whatever. Getting them all down on computer disks so they can be grabbed in an emergency, makes sense. Even more important, having copies in a safe place away from your house is backup insurance.

VISITOR BRINGS IN AILING COMPUTER TO FREE LAB, LEAVES HAPPY WITH THE PROBLEM FIXED

The increasing popularity of our ongoing Free Computer Lab sessions, open to all, members and non-members, is easy to understand. Take the case just last Monday when a friend of this writer called with a computer problem. His wife had taken lessons several years ago at the center. This friend's computer had ceased operating. He decided he would reload the program. But during the reloading procedure the program would just halt. Rather than format the hard drive and starting over again, he thought there must be an easier way to solve the problem. He called this writer, which proved not to be the easier way he had hoped for. But this writer suggested he bring his desktop to the next day's free computer lab at the SeniorNet classroom at the Phantom Lake Elementary School.

This writer boasted to the friend that the best brains in the computer field are with the SeniorNet group. The next morning around 10 he showed up at the classroom, lugging his desktop, and signed in under the helping guidance of PAST PRES. ADELLA GRANGER who presides at the sessions. There were 11 others ahead of him, all being helped with varied computer problems. When his turn came, he was assigned to JOHN WISE who explored the problem, and began tests to solve the problem. Once or twice during the procedure, Wise would briefly confer with FACILITIES COORDINATOR KEN CRANDALL. Finally, the moment of truth when the reloading of the Windows program was nearing the halfway point, where it had earlier jammed. This time, smooth sailing, and the installation was successfully completed, with smiles all around.

The impressed visitor, now leaving with his computer in good working order, checked with REGISTRAR LOUISE FLORA who was also helping visitors, on possible courses he could take. The popular free computer lab sessions were launched a number of years ago when then Vice Pres. Granger assumed responsibility for the program, attending all sessions and assigning those with problems to available instructors. Reminder: Free lab sessions in November are scheduled for three Tuesday mornings, Nov. 8-22-29, at 9:30 am to Noon.

OUR TEACHING RANKS GROW: A warm welcome to yet another skilled computer expert, DORIS FORD, who is bringing her long-time expertise here to join the ranks of our skilled SeniorNet instructors. She has a long history as a teacher, starting with business courses in a junior/senior high school. Her interests later shifted to computers. "In 1982 I took a two-week course at a computer company," she recalled of that early computer era. "They noticed I had a teaching credential and hired me. I spent one year assisting computer trainers. Having no home computer and the computer company refused to allow me to practice on their computers, I could only assist, rather than teach. Towards the end of the year I purchased a computer and for a month sat at the computer learning Lotus and MultiMate.

"Another computer company hired me as their trainer/consultant and I was off and running. I taught businesses computer courses for several years. Finally, the owner decided to get out of the computers, thinking computers would disappear. I sent my resume to five computer companies in the Seattle area, (I was living in Santa Monica, CA), and received three long-distance phone calls asking me to interview. I flew to Seattle in December 1988 and interviewed three companies on a Saturday, looked at town houses and returned to Santa Monica. I was offered all three jobs, but opt for the company I felt comfortable with. I closed the Long Beach company in late December of 1988 and drove to Kirkland Jan. 8th to sign the final papers for my current town house. I worked for the Bellevue computer company until I retired."

LOG ON—SMELL THE FLOWERS: A recent arrival to this area, and new member of SeniorNet, MERRILL HAWKINS uses her computer skills in a special way: As a docent with the Bellevue Botanical Gardens she is working on the Genus 11 project doing data entry for them. As she explained it: "They are assembling a database which shows both a photograph and a botanical description of each plant in the garden. It is a major task that involves many volunteers. Membership in the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society is a requisite for volunteer work there but it is well worth it. If any members of SeniorNet would be interested I will be glad to give them the info." Earlier, while living in California, she worked at a non-profit for 10 years, first in fundraising and then in community education. "I used computers extensively in both jobs, and I use my computer skills now for my volunteer work." While living in California, she and her husband had a house way, way down in Baja, Mexico.

She moved to Seattle last year after the death of her husband, an Air Force colonel and fighter pilot in three wars. Hawkins had visited this area while her son and daughter-in-law attended the University of Washington, and liked the region. "I did not know anyone when I moved here -- I met SeniorNet member BITTY RAUSCH at Luther Burbank Park on Mercer Island where I lived before moving to Bellevue last month. She has been an incredible resource for me and a good friend. She encouraged me to attend one of the SeniorNet meetings and I was instantly interested." Hawkins added, " I am delighted to be a member of SeniorNet and am looking forward to furthering my knowledge of computers and volunteering as a Granpal too!"

PRES. DELORES DAVIS describes her talk this past month before the WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF TALKING BOOKS AND BRAILLE on "Writing Your Life Story," as an impressive experience. "What was exciting besides trying to tell people who can't see how to write," she said, "was that the program was recorded and played live on the Internet with persons from

other states also participating!! My first such experience!" Also addressing the meeting was Don Donaldson, the 94-year-old principal of the School for the Blind. He discussed his autobiography, "What's In a Name."

MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: She is MERRILEE GEORGE, and has taken over the post of SeniorNet volunteer coordinator, succeeding Davis who has held the post for many years. She is the one who is to be contacted for anyone wanting to become a member or wanting information about our organization. She can be reached online at merrileeg@aol.com.

HELP SUPPORT PHANTOM LAKE SCHOOL: Did you know that OFFICE DEPOT has a program where five per cent of qualifying purchases, made during the program period, will go to our host PHANTOM LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL? Just make sure you designate the school when you purchase such items as printer ink, school supplies and many other items. The store will tally the qualifying purchases made during the program period and award credit to the school to use for free school supplies.

HANDY COMPUTER TIPS:

GET A LIFT WITH A NEW CURSOR POINTER: In case your cursor pointer looks worn or is becoming tiresome, it's fairly simple to change its look. Just click Start, then Control Panel. In Category View in our XP setup, click on Printers and Other Hardware, then click on Mouse. Click –what else?—the Pointers tab and browse available themes for something you really like. Now, select the pointer you think you like, and click OK. If you want more tips, copy and paste URL, <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/homeusers/articles/5tips.mspx> (*Thanks to Windows XP Cool Tips, by Kleber Stephenson*)

RETIRE THAT OLD COMPUTER---SAFELY: Microsoft window tips has some excellent suggestions to protect yourself and your personal information before you sell or discard your computer hardware. "If you're ready to replace, sell, or put your old computer out to pasture," according to Microsoft Tips, "it's very important to eradicate personal data stored on your computer's hard drive before unplugging it for the last time. You should always remember that manually deleting computer files doesn't mean an identity thief can't recover them, possibly putting you or your family at risk." Use the following URL (Internet address) to get the full story: <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/update/donatecomputer.mspx>

YOUR SENIORNET DATE BOOK FOR NOVEMBER:

Tuesday, Nov.1th at 11:30 am

**No-Host Kaffee Klatch, Meet, Make New Friends
Crossroads-Bellevue Mall Food Circus, 156th Ave. NE, at NE 8th, Bellevue**

Tuesday, Nov.15th at 10 am

**Monthly Membership Meeting
New Hope Ministries Church, 15760- NE 4th St., Bellevue**

Followed by Kaffee Klatch at Crossroads Mall

Three Tuesdays, Nov.8-22-29, at 9:30 -12 Noon

Free Computer Help Labs-All Welcome, Members or Not

Phantom Lake Elementary School, SeniorNet Classroom

Instructors will sit with you at a computer to help solve problems

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NOTE: Those submitting news items for consideration are asked to keep them brief, and email them before the 25th of the month. All material subject to editing. Please send to b26flyer@comcast.net
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If you wish to receive this free monthly newsletter, update your email address or unsubscribe, rush your full name, phone and email address to pugetsnet6@qwest.net. NOTE: While all computer-operating tips come from usually reliable sources, readers are reminded you use them at YOUR OWN RISK. Again, in case you have friends who are online, and may be interested in taking classes to expand their skills, please forward this newsletter to them by clicking Forward when this message is displayed. Then enter their address in the To box, and click Send. We welcome your brief personal news items and article items, suggestions, sent to the editor at b26flyer@comcast.net
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