



2022

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**Tuesday  
November 8, 2022**



*Glenn Pubal*  
*of*  
*Royal Business Equipment*



## Using Zoom & In Room Meeting

**Our links can be found at:**

[LCCUG.com/links](http://LCCUG.com/links), There you will find many interesting places to visit. Check them out and see what you can find interesting

## **NOTICE: THIS MEETING WILL BE A HYBRID MEETING**

**LCCUG Meetings will be happening on ZOOM  
& in Person**

**At our new time: from 10 am. - noon**

**Workshop will be held after the meeting starting at Noon**

**Please Email: [info@lccug.com](mailto:info@lccug.com) if you have any questions or concerns!**

## A Word From Our President



At the October meeting (held at 201 W. Erie Ave, Lorain), we learned a lot about using Smartwatches and Smartphones for monitoring your health. I think it got all of us thinking about how we could use this.

We hope to have a good turnout at our November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting so we can discuss the direction of our club from now forward. Please come to offer your input as to how we can better meet the group's needs.

At that same November meeting (in person and on ZOOM), we will have our annual visit from Glenn Pubal, of Royal Business in Lorain. We hope to have a good turnout to welcome Glenn back. We always appreciate the time and information he gives us. Here is the information about the meeting:

Please join us for our annual update of the latest trends in the world of technology. Glenn Pubal will discuss the latest information that he has concerning how the tech industry is changing and evolving. He will discuss the latest info from Intel, Microsoft and other tech companies so that we may keep up to date with exciting and useful information.

Glenn Pubal's Royal Business has been a proud sponsor of our club for years. Glenn is always a dynamic and interactive speaker that we have learned a lot from over the years. Please plan to attend this meeting beginning at 10:00 am on Tuesday November 8th.

We are talking about having a lunch meeting for our meeting on December 15 at Golden Corral In Elyria. We'd like the input of our members!!

Please drop a line to [info@lccug.com](mailto:info@lccug.com) or be at the November meeting.

As mentioned in our October meeting, here is

## *LCCUG Officers For 2022*

<b>President</b>	Sandee Ruth <a href="mailto:president@lccug.com">president@lccug.com</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Vacant</b> <a href="mailto:vp-programs@lccug.com">vp-programs@lccug.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Don Hall <a href="mailto:secretary@lccug.com">secretary@lccug.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Micky Knickman <a href="mailto:treasurer@lccug.com">treasurer@lccug.com</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Pam Rihel <a href="mailto:newsletter@lccug.com">newsletter@lccug.com</a>
<b>Web Page Editor</b>	Richard Barnett <a href="mailto:webpage@lccug.com">webpage@lccug.com</a>
<b>Statutory Agent</b>	Sandra Ruth <a href="mailto:statutory_agent@lccug.com">statutory_agent@lccug.com</a>
<b>Director of Membership</b>	<b>Vacant</b> <a href="mailto:membership@lccug.com">membership@lccug.com</a>
<b>Director of Advertising</b>	Richard Barnett <a href="mailto:advertising@lccug.com">advertising@lccug.com</a>
<b>Director of Education</b>	Neil Higgins <a href="mailto:education@lccug.com">education@lccug.com</a>

information on entering your medical information into your smartphone.

Iphone: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207021>

Android phone: <https://www.androidpolice.com/how-to-add-medical-information-to-android-smartphone/>

**Sandra Ruth**



**Tuesday  
November 8, 2022**



*Glenn Pubal  
of  
Royal Business Equipment*

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**Please plan to attend this meeting beginning at 10:00 am on Tuesday November 8th.**



**Get Ready for Our Holiday Lunch**

**Mark your calendar for Thursday December 15, 2022**

**That's the day we all meet at Golden Corral.**

**We will be meeting at Golden Corral in Elyria at 12:00**

**Look for more information on our Website or email: [info@lccug.com](mailto:info@lccug.com)**



**Woohoo!**

Your renewal dues have been changed from \$15.00, To 3 years for \$15.00. When everyone else is raising their prices our Computer Club is lowering their dues, so tell your friends to come and Join in the fun and learn computer information.

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## Executive Board Meeting Minutes

**OCTOBER 4, 2022**

The board Zoom video meeting for September was attended by Sandee Ruth, Don Hall, Micky Knickman, Pam Rihel, Richard Barnett and Neil Higgins.

The board agreed to change the workshop meeting from the 3rd Tuesday to the 2nd Tuesday immediately after the main meeting.

Golden Corral has been the choice for the December meeting, however we will await input from the next general meeting.

Richard will check whether Glenn Pubal wishes to be in person or via Zoom for the November meeting.

Neil Higgins informed the board he and his wife will be moving to Pennsylvania. His expertise will certainly be missed.

Micky moved, Neil seconded the meeting be adjourned.



## General Meeting Minutes

**OCTOBER 11 2022**

President Sandee Ruth called the hybrid meeting to order. A motion to accept the minutes as shown in the October issue of the **INTERFACE** was made by Pam Rihel and seconded by Lata Arora passed by voice vote.

Sandee said she would be willing to present a program next year on what libraries have to offer.

Ron Brown, retired physician, presented a Zoom program on what medical options are available with smart watches and smart phones. He covered Apple, Samsung and Fitbit.

Pam moved, Don seconded meeting be adjourned.



**Newsletter Editor:** Pam Rihel using Microsoft Publisher, 2016

**This Month's contributors:** Micky Knickman, Sandra Ruth, Pam Rihel, Don Hall, Neil Higgins, Michael John Neill, Scambusters, Ask Leo, Jim Cerny, Steve Costello, APCUG, Google images, Microsoft Office art online,

Newsletter is now  
Online at:

[lccug.com/newsletters](http://lccug.com/newsletters) or [lccug.com](http://lccug.com)



**Member of Association of Personal Computer Users Groups**

## Computer Club News

**Don't Bring  
in Your Used Ink Cartridges  
LCCUG is not collecting them  
Anymore.  
Thank you to all who have  
supported us in collecting the  
ink cartridges.**

## MEMBERSHIP WITH LCCUG:

Yearly dues are now \$15.00 For 3 years. For more information contact:

LCCUG  
Director of Membership,  
[membership@lccug.com](mailto:membership@lccug.com).

Meeting Location:  
At a new time: from 10 am. - noon  
in a new location: LCCC facility at  
[201 W. Erie, Lorain](http://201W.Erie.Lorain)

Our meeting space is on the first floor – easily accessible – larger – refreshments available! Please email [info@lccug.com](mailto:info@lccug.com) if you have any questions.



# Lorain County Computer Users Group

2022 Calendar of Events

<http://lccug.com>  
email: [info@lccug.com](mailto:info@lccug.com)

## Using Zoom & In Person

Meeting & program starts at 10 am



*2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Changes are announced on the webpage and the newsletter.  
All meetings are open to the public*

January 11, 2022 - Useful Websites and Utilities presented by our Board Members and Our members

February 8, 2022 - Preserving Digital Photos By Mark Schulman

March 8, 2022 - The Pro's and Con's of BACKUPS; introducing "Tech for Senior"

April 12, 2022 - Geeks On Tour Presented by Google Lens

May 10, 2022 - Cyber-Safety in the Digital Age Presented by Norbert "Bob" Gostischa,

June 14, 2022 - Snapseed – Presented By Chris and Jim Gould

July 12, 2022 - Bringing Up Baby starring Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn

August 09, 2022 - Discover more about using YouTube

September 13, 2022 - Cool Websites & Apps

October 11, 2022 - Health-related apps for the smartphone and the smartwatch

November 8, 2022 - To Be Announced

December 15, 2022—Notice the date change- it will now be on Thursday. Holiday Lunch being held at Golden Corral in Elyria at NOON

Please check our website [LCCUG.com](http://LCCUG.com) for more updates. If you have anything you would like to know about, PLEASE let us know. We would really like your input.

LCCUG



**amazon**smile

**You shop. Amazon gives.**

Thinking of shopping with Amazon? Well you can now go to our [lccug.com](http://lccug.com) website and just click on the [amazon](#)smile link and start shopping.

Our club gets rewarded for any items purchased from our website. So the more you buy the better it is for our club. SO START SHOPPING.

## Genealogy Tip of the Day

michaeljohnneill,  
[Rootdig.com](http://Rootdig.com) [mjnrootdig@gmail.com](mailto:mjnrootdig@gmail.com)

### A Picture Scrapbook to Jar Memories Loose

michaeljohnneill, 28 Oct 11:44 PM  
From a few years ago...

A reader on our Facebook page had an excellent idea for helping to jog the memories of older family members. She made a scrapbook of old pictures with room for the person to write down what they remembered about the people in the picture, the location, etc. Generally, the pictures were used as memory prompts.

The relative could then write in the book at their leisure as things came to mind.

Sometimes an interview simply isn't long enough or memories come flooding back after it's over.

# NEED HELP?



## Here's Who to Contact:

### Neil Higgins

440-985-8507 - [higgins.neil@gmail.com](mailto:higgins.neil@gmail.com)

Evenings 6 p.m. -10 p.m. + Weekends

Hardware, Linux & Windows Operating Systems,

Chromebooks, Tweaking your system

### Micky Knickman

440-967-3118 - [micky@knickman.com](mailto:micky@knickman.com)

Daily 5:00 am to 3:00 pm. Leave message if no answer.

General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation, Basic to Advanced Windows

### Richard Barnett

440-365-9442 - [Richard216@aol.com](mailto:Richard216@aol.com)

Evenings & Weekends

General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation, Basic to Advanced Windows & Web Page Design

### Sandee Ruth

440-984-2692 - [sandee29@gmail.com](mailto:sandee29@gmail.com)

Basic Word Processing, Windows, & Web Design

Advanced Internet

### Pam Casper Rihel

440-277-6076 or 440-308-8196

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm Monday thru Thursday

Genealogy help

[prihel1947@gmail.com](mailto:prihel1947@gmail.com)

### Denny Smith Unavailable at this time

440-355-6218 - [dennis.smith@windstream.net](mailto:dennis.smith@windstream.net)

Microsoft EXCEL

Leave message on machine if no answer

If any of our members are interested in helping other users with what programs you are adept at, please contact any of our officers with you name, what program or programs you would be willing to give help with, you email address and or phone number and when you would like to have them call you. Thanks



## LCCUG ONGOING WORKSHOPS

ALL ARE FREE AND SOME ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

### Problem Solving Workshop

**Date: Tuesday- November 15, 2022**

**Time: 12PM –Please show up by 12:30 Instructor: Micky Knickman**

**Place: LCCC @ 201 W. Erie Ave., Lorain, OH**

Learn how to repair or update your computer by changing hard drives, memory, CD ROMs, etc.

**This workshop is limited to LCCUG members in good standing.**

The Problem Solving Workshop is being held at our new building, LCCC, 201 W. Erie Ave. Lorain, Ohio

You are asked to bring in your computer, laptop and other electronics that you need help with unless the problem/question can be replicated on any device.

### Learning About Electronics

**Date: Tuesday - November 15, 2022**

**Time: 12PM –Please show up by 12:30**

**Instructor: Sandee Ruth**

**Place: LCCC @ 201 W. Erie Ave., Lorain, OH**

**Learn how use you electronic devices.**

Members are encouraged to bring their tablets, iPod, kindles, etc. for assistance from Sandee and any other knowledgeable members. The public is welcome to sit in on these sessions.

### LCCUG WORKSHOP Class Ideas?

Neil would like some ideas on what type of projects you are interested in learning about. Contact:

**Neil Higgins** [Education@lccug.com](mailto:Education@lccug.com).

## Officers Nominations

### Elections of Officers 2023

Elections to be held at the December 8th Meeting

President Sandee Ruth [president@lccug.com](mailto:president@lccug.com)

Vice President: Vacant  
[vp-programs@lccug.com](mailto:vp-programs@lccug.com)

Secretary Don Hall  
[Secretary@lccug.com](mailto:Secretary@lccug.com)

Treasurer Micky Knickman  
[treasurer@lccug.com](mailto:treasurer@lccug.com)

Newsletter Editor Pam Rihel  
[newsletter@lccug.com](mailto:newsletter@lccug.com)

Webpage Editor Richard Barnett  
[webpage@lccug.com](mailto:webpage@lccug.com)

Statutory Agent Sandra Ruth  
[statutory\\_agent@lccug.com](mailto:statutory_agent@lccug.com)

Director of Membership: Vacant  
[membership@lccug.com](mailto:membership@lccug.com)

Director of Advertising Richard Barnett  
[advertising@lccug.com](mailto:advertising@lccug.com)

Director of Education Neil Higgins  
[education@lccug.com](mailto:education@lccug.com)

If you would like to run for one of these offices, please contact any officer and let them know which office you would like to be nominated for.

Thank you and hope to see you all Thursday Dec.15, 2022 for our Holiday Lunch. Step up and become an officer; your dues are paid for by the club.



## The Lorain County Chapter of OGS

is having its next meeting online:

**Check our webpage for the next program.**

<http://loraincoogs.org/events.html>



We are having our meetings virtually using [bluejeans.com](http://bluejeans.com).

To join the meeting on a computer or mobile phone:

<https://bluejeans.com/5006724159?src=calendarLink>

Also a link will be sent to you before the meeting.

North Ridgeville Library, 35700 Bainbridge Rd. North Ridgeville, Ohio. Meetings are free and open to the public. Social time is at 6:30 PM and the program begins at 7:00 PM. **Canceled Until further notice due to Covid-19**

John Kolb  
[secretary@loraincoogs.org](mailto:secretary@loraincoogs.org)

## LCCUG is on Facebook

Come and visit our Facebook page for interesting facts and ideas. You can get a lot of computer information from our Facebook page. Have a question ask it on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lccug>

## Interesting Internet Finds September 2022

by Steve Costello  
[scostello@sfcug.com](mailto:scostello@sfcug.com)



### ***How To Make Android Faster: 11 Things That Work (And 3 That Don't)***

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/android-faster-works/>

I have Android phones and tablets, so this post got my attention. I am always looking for ways to make these devices work faster. I have used most of the tips at one time or another, and I no longer use the 3 that don't work even before reading this.

# Internet Tips and Tricks - Can you live without it?



By Jim Cerny, Education Chair and Forums  
Coordinator Sarasota Technology Users Group  
<https://thetug.org/>  
[jimcerny123@gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

Ah, the Internet – gateway to the world, endless knowledge, the master of all trivia, hot breaking news, entertainment, and boundless exploration. We all enjoy the Internet for many reasons. So, let's explore and review some of the basics of the Internet so we can enjoy using it even more.

Here are some terms to understand –

**WI-FI** – A wireless network using a modem to access the Internet for any device capable of doing so. Your smartphone, iPad, and computer can access a Wi-Fi network IF one is available, and you have the password to use.

**MODEM** – A device (usually wireless) that allows communication from a computer, phone, etc., to the Internet. Your Internet service provider usually also provides this device to you.

**ROUTER** – Usually built into the modem, which allows multiple and various devices wireless access to the Internet network simultaneously.

There are two basic ways of accessing the Internet – through your Internet service provider, who allows you access through a modem or through the cellular phone network. Many devices can access the Internet either way. Let's start with your cell phone.

**Cell phones** (or “smartphones” such as the iPhone) were designed to make telephone calls using the cellular telephone network. You purchase (or make payments for) your cell phone and use the cellular network. Your provider probably has an assortment of plans from which you can choose with different monthly rates. If you use your cell phone (or any device that can use the cellular network) to access the Internet, you will pay usage charges depending upon your billing plan. But cell phones can also access the Internet through a Wi-Fi modem – the

choice is yours.

**With a Wi-Fi modem/router** in your home, you can access the Internet (your Wi-Fi network) all you want by paying the monthly access fee to your Internet provider.

So the bottom line for keeping your costs down is always using the Internet modem/router rather than the cellular network unless you have a good cellular package that includes many hours of use for your cost. So now here are some tips to help you use the Internet more easily and at less cost.

Go to “settings” on your smartphone and look for “Wi-Fi.” In that option, you will see IF you have Wi-Fi turned on (and it should be) and what networks are in range of your device. You may be at a hotel or a restaurant, but let's look at your home Wi-Fi. Most networks will require a password to access. Once you enter that password, your phone will remember it so you can get it right the next time you access it. But you should have your password written down! (Use a password manager/JT) You will need it someday, trust me! Most phones will also have a “default” setting to use the cellular network to access the Internet when there is no Wi-Fi network connected. This is handy, but you should be aware of using the cellular network or Wi-Fi to access the Internet.

Many options are available – different rates for different services and speeds, usage time, and devices. It is always wise to contact your provider at least every six months (both cell phone and Internet) and ask if a different plan would be better and cheaper for you. Take a moment to ask Google some good questions such as: “How do I access a Wi-Fi network with my cell phone?” or “How do I access the Internet while traveling?”

These days we all expect Internet access wherever we are; it is a vital necessity for most people. How about you? Could you live without the Internet?





# The First Things to Do with a New Windows Computer



You only have one chance to take some of these steps.

by [Leo A. Notenboom](#)

The steps you should take right after unboxing your new computer will save time, frustration, effort, and data loss later.

Congratulations! You got a new computer!

Of course, you want to jump right in and start using it *right now*, but if you can hold on a bit, there are a few tasks to do first. The steps you take now can save you lots of time and grief later. (Meaning when all heck breaks loose and the machine dies, the software crashes, or you get a massive [malware](#) infection.)

Every day, people lose important data, precious memories, and valuable time because they didn't take a few simple steps to prepare.

And by far the best time to prepare is at the beginning.

1. Disconnect from the internet
2. Create a system image
3. Make a recovery drive
4. Setup automated backups
5. Confirm security software
6. Reconnect
7. Update completely
8. Back up again

## 1. Disconnect that new computer from the internet

I know you've already connected; you just couldn't help yourself, I'm sure. I'm the same way.

You may need to stay online to complete the initial setup of your computer using your Microsoft account, but until we've made sure of a couple of items, **let's pull off the highway for a moment** if you can.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Make a system image backup

Using [Macrium Reflect](#), [EaseUS Todo](#) (the free edition of either will do), or a similar tool, **take a**

**complete [image backup](#)** — sometimes called a full system [backup](#) — of your *entire* machine. Make sure your backup tool supports what's called a "[bare metal](#)" restore: the ability to restore to a machine that has a *completely empty* hard drive. It'll be on the program's list of features.

Even if you did get installation media, which is rare these days, a backup image taken now can be more convenient should you need to reset the computer to the state it was in on the day you got it.

The reasoning here is simple: this backup is an image of your machine *as you got it*. It's a true reset to factory settings. Should you ever need to start over and reformat/reinstall the machine, you can restore this image backup instead. It will return your machine to the exact condition it's in right now in a single step. You don't even need to know how to do that today; the important thing is that you create the image backup and save it now.

## 3. Make a System Recovery drive

A [recovery drive](#) is a [USB](#) flash drive created by Windows from which you boot your computer in order to perform a number of Windows recovery tasks, including reinstalling Windows from scratch.

[How to Create a Windows Recovery Drive](#) walks you through the process. Once again, **this is something you want to do shortly after getting your new machine** because it'll reflect the version of Windows as installed on your machine on the day it arrived.

Another option is to [download Windows Setup media](#) and save it (or download it at some future date when you need it). The issue here is that this image will be generic. It may not include everything the recovery drive made with your own machine would.

## 4. Set up regular backups

While you've got your backup software out, take the time to **schedule regular automated backups**.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9) Ask Leo

Exactly what that looks like depends on your needs and how you use your computer, but in general, backing up your machine daily to an external hard drive is good practice.

If you're not sure what to do, [I have a process outlined for you](#).

## 5. Confirm your security software

Windows 10 and 11 come with security software pre-installed and enabled: Windows Security. If you leave that enabled, you're done here.

On the other hand, occasionally you'll find other solutions pre-installed by your manufacturer, or you might want to avoid the Windows built-in solution for some reason.

Either make sure the pre-installed software is configured and properly enabled, or download the alternative you choose and set it up instead. Make sure to uninstall the security tools you're replacing (except for Windows Security, which will step aside when something else replaces it).

[My recommendation](#), however, is that Windows Security is just fine. **With it enabled from the start, you really don't need to do anything else.**

## 6. Connect to the internet

You may have had to do this already to download alternative security software, but regardless, now's the time if you haven't.

We used to discuss things like firewalls at this stage, but the fact is:

- You're likely connecting through a router, which acts as a perfectly adequate firewall.
- Windows will have its own firewall enabled as well.

With those as safe assumptions, connect.

## 7. Update, update, update

Take the time now to update Windows in particular and all other applications and software installed on your machine.

**Check for updates repeatedly until there are no more updates available.<sup>2</sup>**

Keeping your software updated keeps your machine safe from malware that exploits bugs in the software on your machine, known as unpatched [vulnerabilities](#). Updates are issued regularly to fix those bugs.

## 8. Back up again

Once your machine is completely up to date, **take another image backup**.

While the image backup taken in step 3 is perhaps the most important, *this* backup will be the most convenient. Why? Because if you ever need to use it, you'll have already performed steps 4, 5, and 6, and will have a head start on step 7. You won't have to update nearly as much as if you started with the machine returned to factory settings.

There's an argument that you don't need both, but I prefer caution. This is the backup you're most likely to use, while the backup from step 3 is an additional safety net.

### Do this

*Of course there's always more, but the steps outlined above are a good start towards basic protection. These steps will help protect your investment, data, time, and peace of mind.*

*Now would also be a good time to [subscribe to Confident Computing](#)! Less frustration and more confidence, solutions, answers, and tips in your inbox every week.*

This work by Ask Leo! is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#). Additional information is available at <https://askleo.com/creative-commons-license/>.

## Genealogy Tip of the Day

michaeljohnneill,  
[Rootdig.com](#) [mjnrootdig@gmail.com](mailto:mjnrootdig@gmail.com)

### The Nearest Post Office?

michaeljohnneill, 25 Oct 03:17 PM

Do you know where the nearest post office was to where your ancestor lived? That post office name or town name (which may not have been where your ancestor lived) may be listed as their residence on various official documents.

It may seem like they moved or lived in different places when they in fact did not.

Try a [Genealogy Search](#) on GenealogyBank.

## WATCH OUT FOR THESE 3 ENERGY SAVING SCAMS

*INSULATION, REPLACEMENT WINDOWS,  
AND GADGETS MAY FAIL TO DELIVER EN-  
ERGY SAVINGS: INTERNET SCAMBUSTERS  
#1,037*

As we head into cooler weather, scammers use the opportunity to push energy-saving products and services that often fail to deliver on promises.

They're dishonest about the savings you can achieve from home insulation, replacement windows, and gadgets that are supposed to cut electricity usage.

Who doesn't want to score energy savings these days? Not only are utility bills climbing, but we're also increasingly aware of the environmental cost of using our precious natural resources.

Cue a bunch of scammers and their misleading sales spiels, tricking people into handing over their cash for dubious products and services they claim will deliver those savings and make us eco-friendlier.

A big challenge for consumers is that we usually lack the technical savvy to check out these claims. So, if you don't do your research, it's easy to get conned into paying.

Here are three of the most common energy savings scams you may encounter.

### **INSULATION SCAMS**

Most of us know that properly insulating the walls and roof spaces in our homes can significantly reduce heat loss. But it's difficult to know what works and how much you'll likely save.

For example, a few weeks ago, a Florida company was ordered to stop making deceptive claims about a special wall paint that supposedly reduced heat loss.

### **REPLACEMENT WINDOWS**

Spammers are currently bombarding consumers with ads for double- and triple-pane windows, which they say will result in significant noise and heat insulation.

While it's true that properly manufactured multi-pane windows can achieve savings, once again, scammers make outrageous claims about the R-value of their products, without providing any supporting evidence.

Often, these windows are sold via spam or using high-pressure door-to-door and tele-sales tactics, including too-good-to-be-true prices that give them a foot in the door. These turn out to be only for basic, standard-size frames - and you discover your windows will cost a lot more.

Sometimes, the scammers say there's a special discount for your neighborhood if you sign up now or that their reduced prices (which actually haven't been cut at all) will enable them to use your home as their neighborhood model.

They may also offer short-term warranties with all sorts of get-out clauses, which they may try to avoid showing you.

### **PLUG-IN ENERGY SAVING DEVICES**

Social media is full of stories about energy-saving devices developed by inventors that supposedly the big utility companies are trying to suppress.

You simply connect them to a power outlet to produce savings of up to 60 percent in energy use, they claim.

Promoters may use charts and statistics that seem to back up their energy-saving claims. But, in general these are false or, at best, misleading.

There's a technical issue behind these claims that we won't go into. But it boils down to a difference between what are called "real power" and "apparent power." Unless you're a big

*(Continued on page 12)*

company, you're billed for real power, but apparent power is usually the "evidence" used in savings claims.

Of course, there are some devices that can help you save energy, most notably "smart" thermostats. These are often available at a substantial discount from your utility supplier. But scammers may sell them at an inflated price and claim the discount for themselves.

### **SOLAR PANELS AND MORE**

The tricks we've listed aren't the only energy-saving scams. The current hot topic relates to solar power scams, which we plan to cover in depth in a later issue.

Others relate to unverifiable claims about energy usage in domestic appliances. Generally, the numbers you see on those yellow stickers in the store are accurate and comply with regulations - but beware that salesperson's exaggeration about how much you'll save.

Plus, there are crooks using so-called home energy audits, often described as "free," but which provide a platform for them to get into your home and invent issues that they then offer to put right.

We also covered utility scams in our issue #758, which you can read here: [5 Utility Scams and Where You're Most Likely to Encounter Them](#).

### **HOW TO AVOID AN ENERGY-SAVING SCAM?**

Here are 10 commonsense tips to avoid being hoodwinked by these scammers.

1. Learn and understand a little about R-values. Forbes magazine has a good guide: [What Is Insulation R Value? Everything You Need To Know](#). There's also a map showing recommended home wood frame wall insulation values.

2. Ask for evidence to support any money-saving claims.

3. Contact your utility providers for information on devices and tactics to reduce your consumption. Don't rely on salespeople.

4. Seek customer references from contractors and others about their work and products.

5. Read contracts including all the small print. And check warranties, especially for length of coverage and exclusions.

6. Never sign a contract under pressure, especially with claims that the offer is only available right now. In fact, if you feel pressured to sign, that should be enough to make you distrust a salesperson.

7. Beware of imposters claiming to be from utility companies or energy-efficiency experts such as the government's EnergyStar service. Don't let them into your home without thoroughly checking them out.

8. Don't provide confidential financial information over the phone or to a door-step visitor, again until you've verified their identity.

9. Get at least two competitive bids for any type of insulation or replacement windows you're considering.

10. If you're thinking of buying and using a device that claims to cut electricity consumption, research it on the Internet to see what others are saying. Be skeptical - mostly, they don't work.

Yes, we all want to make energy savings. But the best way of making them is to monitor your usage to identify ways of cutting back - and taking guidance from your utility providers.

### **THIS WEEK'S SCAM ALERT**

IRS Warning: The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued an urgent warning about a sudden and massive increase in identity theft

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attacks via SMS text messages (smishing). The texts pretend to be from the IRS and offer help with setting up an account or news about tax credits. The scammers use a fake IRS sign-on web page to steal victims' confidential information. The agency never asks for this type of information in emails or texts, so, if you get one, it's a scam.

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## Interesting Internet Finds September & August 2022

by Steve Costello  
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While going through more than 300 RSS feeds, I often encounter things I think might interest other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during September 2022.

### **What To Do If You Forget Your Android Phone's PIN, Pattern, Or Password**

<https://www.howtogeek.com/226942/what-to-do-if-you-forget-your-android-phone%E2%80%99s-pin-pattern-or-password/>

It used to be easy to reset things if you forgot this information. Recently it has been becoming much harder. If you have an Android phone, you need to read this post.

### **Gmail: Send A Group Email**

<https://cynmackley.com/2022/09/12/gmail-send-a-group-email/>

I know a lot of user group members use Gmail. But, I also know not everyone knows how to send a group email with Gmail. If you don't know how to do this, read this post to learn how.

### **Streaming DVR Face-Off: YouTube TV, Hulu**

### **+ Live TV, & The Rest**

<https://www.techhive.com/article/1072359/streaming-dvr-face-off-youtube-tv-hulu-live-tv-the-rest.html>

If you are thinking of cord-cutting and are worried about having a DVR, this is a must-read post for you. There are even options given for antenna-only situations.

### **How To Create A USB Image To Back Up Your Data**

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/create-usb-image-data-backup/>

This is a little bit more advanced than what I usually post. I use this process frequently enough that it has become a habit.

### **What Is Smishing?**

<https://askleo.com/what-is-smishing/>

I am sure you have heard of phishing, but do you know what smishing is? Check out this post to learn about it, what to watch for, and what to do about it.

### **Deleting Your Way To Better Security**

<https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/deleting-your-way-to-better-security/>

I found this article to apply to both the PC and smartphones. It makes a lot of sense to me that the less software you have the fewer problems you will have.

### **What You Need To Know About The Gmail Redesign**

<https://www.techlicious.com/tip/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-gmail-redesign/>

I have not had any problems with the redesign, but I know there are a lot of Gmail users in the user groups so I thought this post could help anyone having problems.

