*TC/PC Exists to
Facilitate and Encourage
the Cooperative Exchange of
PC Knowledge and
Information Across
All Levels of Experience*

September 2020

General Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2020
7:00 PM

Tips to Take Your Zoom Meeting to the Next Level

Presenter: Jim Grotz
Via Zoom

TC/PC member Jim Grotz has been using Zoom for online meetings on a regular basis in his work and volunteer activities. As a result he has been researching ways to improve that Zoom experience. Whether it's the selection of microphones and speakers, lighting choices, or Zoom app settings, he has tested and applied changes that have made a difference and he is going to share those tips and tricks with us at the September meeting. If you have suggestions to add as well, please bring those to share at Tuesday's meeting via Zoom.🖥

Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.

The Digital Viking

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Not Another Sunset!
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group
Drive Light Newsletter, www.uchug.org, president (at) uchug.org

I have seen the sun set on a lot of technology. As tech improvements are made and new innovations come to market to brighten our days, the old devices, systems, and ways of doing things often slowly pass over the horizon and out of sight.

In most cases this is a good thing, bringing many benefits, but there are rarely any downsides, however minor. With a lot of innovations, there can still be some advantages to older ways. Young people today don't know what it is like to get up from the couch, walk to the TV and turn a knob to change the channel, yet with all that convenience, the remote control can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Another thing many don't remember is having to manually defrost a freezer. Self-defrosting technology saves labor but uses more energy. Automatic transmissions in automobiles made driving easier for everyone but provided poorer mileage until the technology improved. Now many automatic transmissions are manuals with a computer doing the shifting, and it is hard to find a new vehicle with a true manual transmission. A true manual can still be an advantage, however, since when so few today know how to operate them, they are less likely to be stolen or carjacked. A lot of tech innovations improve our lives in almost all aspects, and there seems little reason to retain the old ways.

Computer technology has improved greatly over 40 years. It would be hard to argue that we would be better off today with no Internet and non-portable devices controlled through a text interface or rows of switches, with large monochrome displays that can't show graphics. All the changes we've seen, from the DOS command line prompt through ten or more versions of Windows, all the versions of Apple products, from the stationary desktop through laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, smartphones, and watches, have meant that a lot of products have seen the sun set on them over the years. In most cases, we run enthusiastically towards the rising sun of new products and capabilities. In a few cases, though, it seems major tech players want to push our still useful and valued technology off a western cliff into the abyss of obscurity before we are willing to part with it, all in the interest of ringing up new sales.

I live in the Wintel (Windows-Intel) world and have seen many products and operating system sunsets. DOS was revolutionary, but Windows graphics and mouse use made leaving it easy. Windows XP was a great OS; I'm writing this on a 15-year-old PC that still runs fine (without an Internet connection), with an early version of Microsoft Word that has all I really need. MS Office is one case where I feel Microsoft has been adding "features" and changing versions primarily to squeeze more money out of users. There have been some nice feature improvements over the years, but a lot of the recent changes have been to the user interface, which I feel was just fine as it was. I'm tired of companies that feel they need to change the look and feel of their software to justify new versions and fees. I especially don't care for the idea of "subscription" software (like Office 365), where I feel I've just become a revenue stream to some company.

I know some will say I should perhaps switch to Linux, or at least to open-source (and free) office productivity software, but I unfortunately still live in a working world, where I must use my employer's MS OS and Office

I prefer not to cloud my sadly-limited mind with having to be fluent in multiple ways of doing things. I have the utmost respect for multi-lingual people, as I have really only ever spoken English, and I often don't feel I've mastered the one language.

I had a good run with Windows 7 and was sad to have to plan last year for its January 2020 security sunset. A year ago, my wife and I were running three Win7 computers (a desktop and two laptops), three Chrome OS devices (two Chromebooks and a Chromebit), a Win10 computer I hardly used, a couple of tablets, an Android Smartphone and an iPhone. I'm still transitioning to Windows 10; while my wife is happy on her new Win10 desktop, I'm still setting up the new Win10 laptop I bought myself. I try to be good and use my old Win10 computer, but like an unmotivated dieter, I still briefly cheat from time to time and reconnect the network cable on my old Win7 laptop.

I've come to terms with Windows 10, having had to use it at work extensively. The Win7 security end-of-life deadline turned out to be a boon for Microsoft and computer makers, as least in regards to my family, It caused me to buy two new desktops (I bought my mom one as well) and a laptop I might not otherwise have been in the market for. It is nice to have new, faster and better equipment, but I resent being forced into things by the deadlines of others.

While I grudgingly use Microsoft's products, I also chose devices running Google's Chrome OS to add to my tech stable. I bought my first Chromebook, an Acer Chromebook 11, in 2015. The following year, I bought an Acer Chromebit stick computer. Chrome computers are inexpensive (at least the ones I buy are), quick booting, and very portable. They are great for going on the web and for reading and light writing tasks but are too underpowered for much else. I found my Chromebook was great for web browsing, reading the newspaper, and a wonderful travel accessory. I bought a second Chromebook, a Samsung XE501-C13, in a 2018 Black Friday sale simply because I loved my first one so much I wanted to have a spare.

Photo 1: Acer and Samsung Chromebooks

Google started out of the gate with what Microsoft only went to with Windows 10 -forcing automatic OS updates on the user. Google's Chrome OS updates are small and quick, so you hardly notice they have happened. They have seldom changed the look or features, sticking mostly to security, and I don't recall hearing of anything breaking as the result of an update. Microsoft of course earned disdain from early Win10 users with forced OS updates happening at inopportune times, taking a long time and breaking existing capabilities.

I use my Chromebooks every day, but myChromebit has seen little use. It is plugged into an HDMI port on the back of our smartTV. I bought it a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse and thought I could surf the web with it like my Chromebooks, but my old eyes have problems with the small text at normal TV viewing distances. It is good for watching YouTube videos, but we don't do a lot of that. Since COVID, we have been using it every Sunday morning, as our church now broadcasts services on YouTube.

It was on one of these Sunday morning Chromebit viewing sessions that I noticed it had an odd notification: "Updates end November 2020"! With dismay, I started to research this issue. It appears Google has set up a security sunset date for each model of Chrome OS device. This was not well advertised, so users often only find out near the end of their device's security lifetime.

Photo 2: Acer Chromebit stick computer
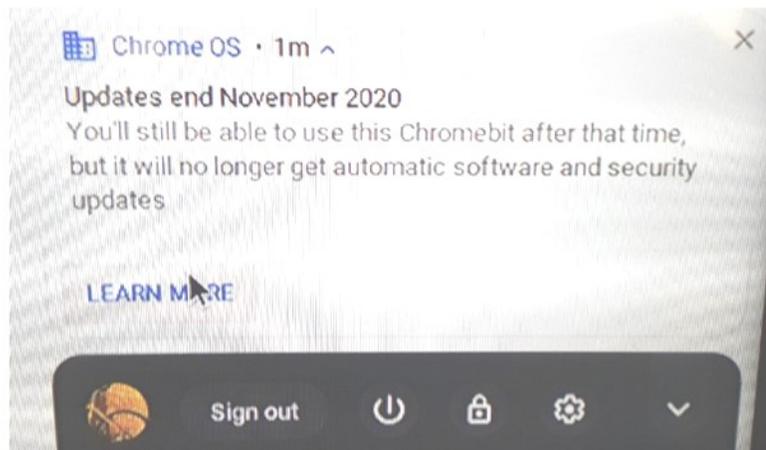
Photo 3: Google Sunset Notice

It turns out all Chrome OS devices have a set date beyond which no more updates will be provided, the Auto Update Expiration (AUE) date. The auto part of AUE doesn't mean much, as I didn't find any evidence you could manually update the OS after that date either. Google provides information on this at www.google.com/chromebook/older. It is not clear if the manufacturers have any input into this date, but Google certainly appears to, as there is evidence they can change it.

Google emphasizes that this does not prevent the use of the Chrome OS device after the AUE date, but the device will stop receiving Chrome OS and browser updates. These updates include:

- "Security updates, bug fixes, and new features for Chromebooks. Existing features may stop working."
- "Support for certain apps and extensions that require specific Chrome OS or browser versions."

I looked up the AUE dates for my three Chrome OS devices. To find the AUE, go to settings, then at the very bottom of the left panel, select "About Chrome OS." Select "Additional details," and in the "Update schedule" section the AUE will be shown. I found mine were:

Asus Chromebit - November 2020
Acer Chromebook - September 2021
Samsung Chromebook - June 2022

This means I'll lose updates on the Chromebit in about 6 months, and I have only a year or two left on my Chromebooks. Now I'm getting that same sinking feeling I get with Microsoft.

I found out a bit more about the AUE from some articles on Chrome enthusiast websites (chromecomputing.com and chromeunboxed.com). According to these articles, Google originally set the AUE dates based on an assumed five-year device life expectancy. The supposed goals were to keep the Chrome OS from having to maintain compatibility with older hardware, keep its reputation as a fast and reliable OS intact and incentivize hardware manufacturers to continue to create new Chrome OS products. They said Google changed to 8+ years of update support for products, starting with those released in 2020. Additionally, Google may be extending the AUE date for recent products to match their new assumed lifespan, so it is possible to find the prior AUE for a product extended.

If Google sticks with the five-year plan for my products, I will be disappointed, as that will make them more restrictive than even Microsoft. I bought the three Win7-installed computers I just retired from use between 2010 and 2012, meaning Microsoft allowed me 8-10 of operation with that OS before "forcing" me to change. I don't know if I'm careful or just lucky, but I've yet to have a computer fail; they always get retired (mostly unwillingly) first.

I guess I'll be looking for a new Chromebook come the Black Friday sales this year. And now every time I see my Chromebooks, in my mind I'll be hearing Elton John singing "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me."🖥

Ohsnap Review

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society
www.aztcs.org, actuary110 (at) yahoo.com

This is a clever tool to make your phone easier to use.

It attaches to the back of your cell phone and has two "fingers" that can pop up. You connect them to form a loop, which you put your finger through when using the phone. Doing so relieves you from having to hold the phone with your thumb and index finger.

The idea is that the Ohsnap protects you from dropping the phone or otherwise losing it when you are distracted. You'll find that it's very comfortable to use with only your middle or index finger to keep the phone attached to your hand.

But that's not all! If you are watching a video or looking at pictures, let the phone lean sideways (or upright) to watch, without the need to hold the phone. Just set it down, leaning on the Ohsnap, vertically, or in landscape mode.

The Ohsnap has a magnetic back so it can stick to anything metallic. There are many surfaces that are useful in this way, while you watch videos or talk to a caller.

It can also stick successfully to any magnetic mount on your car's dashboard, leaving you hands-free for driving.

Ohsnap is quite thin and even when it is attached to your cell phone, your phone is still easy to slip into a pocket or purse. It won't catch on anything when you pull it out since it's edges are very smooth.

Ohsnap

https://www.ohsnap.com

Price $29 ⌨

Protect Your Computer Against Power Outages
By Matt Batt, Past President, The Computer Club
www.scccomputerclub.org, mattbatt (at) gmail.com

The two main causes of damage to computers, TVs, modems, and other sensitive electronics are a sudden loss of power and power fluctuations. Basic power strips do not protect your PC from any sort of electrical fluctuations; surge protectors can protect against power surges, but they offer no protection against drops in line voltage or loss of power.

To protect your computer against power outages or voltage fluctuations, you need a battery backup. UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) units are basically surge protectors that contain a battery inside. In the event of a power failure, your computer will seamlessly switch over to battery power and continue to run. This gives you time to shut down your machine without any damage.

Many UPS units come with software that can detect when the unit switches to battery power and shut down automatically in your absence.

There are many di8fferent UPS offerings on the market. There are small units that can keep a desktop computer running for 5-10 minutes or longer, more expensive units that can keep multiple computers running for hours.

The most important step in choosing a UPS is to buy one that has enough power to give your computer system enough time to shut down properly. While it is possible to calculate the power usage of a computer system by analyzing all of its components, for purposes of this article we can estimate the requirements of a typical computer user in our club.

UPS systems are rated VA (Volt-Amperes). Ignore how it is calculated, but a typical low-end desktop needs a UPS rated at about 480 VA while a high-end computer with a high-end video card would need a UPS rated as high as 1200=1500 VA.

Two types of UPS units have an application to home electronic systems.

The least expensive is a Standby UPS. This type of unit charges its battery and waits. When the power cuts off it will automatically switch to the battery for backup power. The switch takes milliseconds and is fast enough so that most electronics do not shut down.

For a higher cost, you can get a unit with Automatic Voltage Regulation (AVT) that corrects power fluctuations without switching to battery power. This feature protects you from instabilities in line voltage often experienced in lightning storms.

There are a few other considerations to note;

Some units include software for your computer that senses when the UPS switches over to battery power and can automatically initiate the shutdown process.

UPS units generally have a mix of power/surge protected and surge protected only outlets. Make sure that there are enough outlets for your needs.

Some UPS units include surge-protected/filtered ports for your Ethernet and Coax cables. Personally, I don't use these as I've had problems with ethernet cable performance degrading through a UPS.

Be sure to get units that have user-replaceable batteries. UPS batteries last 3-5 years. When a battery fails, you'll either need to buy batteries or but a whole new unit.

I've used Cyberpower and APC UPS units and they all worked as advertised. The two pictured below from Amazon both have shutdown software and replaceable batteries. The APC is rated at 500VA and costs $55.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and two with just Surge protection. It's the model I use on most of my computers and TVs. The Cyberpower has AVR, is rated at 1000VA, and costs $109.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and four with just Surge protection. I use one like it for my main computer, Internet mode, router, and my phone system.

Be careful out there! Think about having a UPS system on your computers, TV, home theater system, and even your phone system to prevent damage caused by power surges and power loss.
🖳

Recover Your Wi-Fi Password
By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
Gigabyte Gazette Newsletter, www.scscc.club, dkretch (at) gmail.com

Computer users often seek technical support when they are unable to access the Internet via their home wireless system.

First, the technician will usually walk the user through the reset procedure for the router or router/modem (turn them off and on). If that does not fix the problem and it is determined the router is putting out a good signal the subsequent conversation often goes something like this:

Technician: What is your password for your router?
User: I don't have a password.
Technician: If your router is not secured (i.e. password protected) you should be able to connect to it.
User: I don't have a password. I just click on the Google (or another browser) icon and get online.
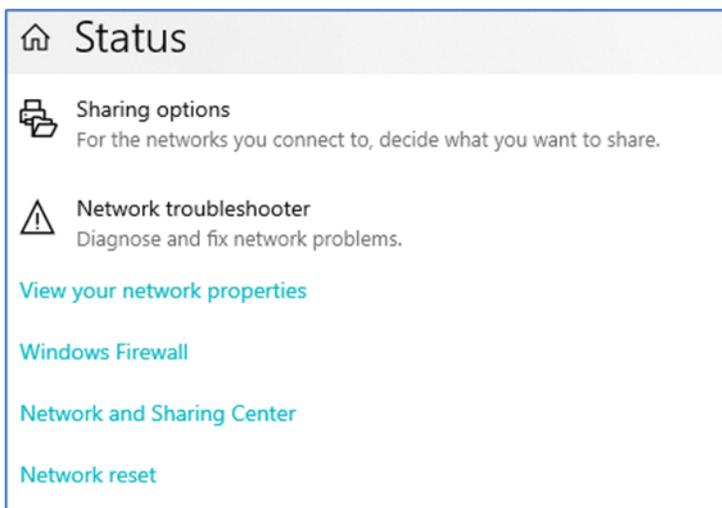

At this point, the Technician explains to User that the Wi-Fi password is stored on User's computer and that a few steps are required to access that password. The technician might guide the user through a process to recover the password using the following procedure.

If the computer connects to the Wi-Fi automatically
With the latest version of Windows 10, Microsoft has buried the Wi-Fi password on a computer more deeply than with prior versions of Windows. You can still find your

Wi-Fi password using the following procedure:
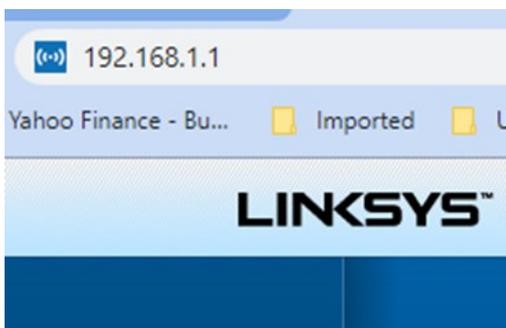
Find your way to the "Wireless Properties"
Right-click on the Internet access icon on the right side of your Taskbar then click on "Open Network and Internet Settings." Click on "Status" then click on "Network and Sharing Center."

Under "Internet" click on your network name (in blue)

then click on "Wireless Properties."
Under "security" you can see the hidden password after you click on "show characters."

If you only own a smartphone/tablet or have a PC which has not stored the Wi-Fi password
Log in to your router as an administrator. You can access your router by entering its IP address into your browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. You can research the default IP address of your router by Googling "IP address [brand name of your router]. Every router I've dealt with had an address of "192.168.X.Y." The most common value for both X and Y is the number 1. If that does not work, try substituting the numbers 0 or 2 for X.

After you've logged in, you should be able to find the Wi-Fi settings on the Administrative pages of your router. There you can look up your Wi-Fi password.

<u>If you are like many people</u>
The Wi-Fi password is written on a sticker on the back of your router. This is how I usually set up home routers and it might be a good thing to do after you have recovered your Wi-Fi password.

This is a simple but effective strategy since it is so easy to find.

A burglar would have to break into your home to steal your password, and they probably would focus on more tangible items.🖥

Add a Caption to a Picture in Word

By Nancy DeMarte, Vice President, Sarasota Technology Users Group
The STUG Monitor`, www.thestug.org, vp1 (at) the stug.org

Any Word document can be enhanced by a picture. To clarify what the picture represents, like its name or location, you can include text in the form of a caption. Word makes it easy to add a caption. Here is how it's done:

Open Word. Add a picture from your Pictures folder by clicking the Insert tab > Pictures. This opens your Picture Gallery. Click a picture > Insert. The picture will appear in your document, but often it is too large. To change its size, click in any corner of the picture and drag your mouse diagonally toward the center until it is your desired size.

You can also move the picture to a different place in your document, but not until you change the layout option. Click the picture and then the Layout Options icon (shown at right). Next click the top left option called Square. Then drag the picture where you want it to be in the document. This icon also allows text to wrap around the picture.

To add a caption, right click the picture and select "Insert Caption" from the dropdown menu. *Figure 1* will be in the caption box if this is the first picture in your document. You won't be able to get rid of the text *Figure 1* until you have entered your caption text. Type your caption in the Caption box and click OK to make your caption appear below the picture.
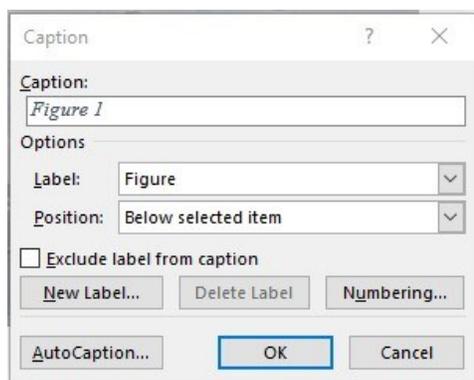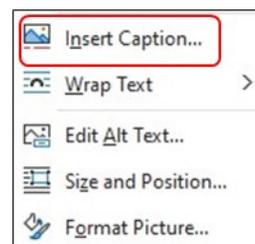
This is a Caption

Now you can click after *Figure 1* and backspace to remove it, leaving only your text. Using the Home tab, you can then remove the italics, center the caption, or change the font and size.

To be sure that your caption remains with its picture, "group" the two together. First click the picture to select it. Small "handles" will surround it. Then hold down the Shift key and click the caption so that both are selected. As soon as you have done that, you will see a new tab on the command ribbon at the top of the screen.

It may say Shape Format or Picture Format. Click either one. Next, toward the right end of the ribbon, you will see an icon called Group. Click Group, then Group again, and your picture and caption will become one box, ready to move anywhere on the page.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200 Willson Road, Edina, MN
Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.
For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.

Get SIG announcements!
Link from www.tcpc.com

Board of Directors*
All members are welcome! Check www.tcpc.com for location.
Selected Saturday mornings

Linux on Saturday
This is for the Linux newbie and those trying to come over from Microsoft to a different operating system.
Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon
Note: No Meetings June-August

Jack Ungerleider   612/418-3494 c
jack@jacku.com

Tech Topics
Technical presentation/discussion on various technical topics from the following areas:
- **Web/Internet**
- **Mobile Devices and Apps**
- **Playing with Programming**
- **DIY (3D Printing, R-Pi, other hobby electronics, etc.)**

Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM
Every month
Right before the general meeting.

Jack Ungerleider   612/418-3494 c
jack@jacku.com

Microsoft Access
All levels. Presentations by expert developers within the group and by MS reps.
Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon
Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmey   952/934-8492
skuhlmey@hotmail.com

Microsoft Office
Addresses the use, integration, and nuances of the Microsoft Office applications.
Combined with Systems on Saturday
Third Saturday of the Month
9:00 AM—Noon
Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmey   952/934-8492
skuhlmey@hotmail.com

Directions to **Summit Place** for **General Meetings**:
Proceed to Eden Prairie Center Flying Cloud Drive . [Flying Cloud Drive runs along the West side of the Eden Prairie Center.] Once you have driven past Eden Prairie Center (on the left) along Flying Cloud Drive you will come to a stop light at Prairie Center Drive. The next intersection with a stop light and left turn lane is Fountain Place. Turn left at Fountain Place and go straight into the parking lot. Turn left again to the first covered entry way of Summit Place. There is plenty of parking in the large parking lot in front of the first Summit Place covered entry way. When you enter the door at the first covered entry way, ask to be directed to the Performance Room for the TC/PC meeting. For a map of more detailed directions and *info on Web SIG and Board meeting*, check the TC/PC website.

Directions to **Edina Executive Plaza** for **Systems on Saturday, Access, Word and Picture Perfect SIGs**: Take Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon exit. [If you have come from the north, cross back over Highway 100 to the east side.] Take the first right and go past Perkins [The golf course will be on your left.] and continue on the east frontage road (Willson Road) to the next building—5200 . There is ample parking in the building's lot. Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

Help yourself by helping others!
Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

Contact TC/PC at www.tcpc.com

September

October

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 General Mtg Tips to take Zoom to next level 6pm Tech Topics	9	10	11	12 9am-Noon Linux on Saturdays
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 9am-Noon Microsoft Office (including Access)
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 9am-Noon Linux on Saturdays
11	12	13 General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	14	15	16	17 9am-Noon Microsoft Office (including Access)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits
is reading this monthly publication at www.tcpc.com..

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for
software drawings. The small membership fee also includes
access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.
(If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)

9/20

Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:

Full name_____

Company name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

❍Home ❍Business ❍Change address: ❍Perm. ❍Temp. 'til _____

Home phone_____ Work phone_____

Online address(es) _____

Where did you hear about TC/PC? _____

❍ I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed.
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I'm signing up for:

❍ Individual/Family Membership ($18)
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If an existing member your # _____
Make checks payable to:
Twin Cities PC User Group
341 County Rd C2 W
Roseville, MN 55113

http://www.tcpc.com

❍ Check #_____ ❍ Bill me
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I'm interested in:
❍ Training classes ❍ Volunteering
❍ Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.
List here:

Administrative Use Only   Rec'd_____ Chk#_____

September 8, 2020

General Meeting

Tips to take your Zoom Meeting to Next Level

Presenter: Jim Grotz

Via Zoom

More info: www.tcpc.com

Twin Cities PC USER GROUP

341 County Rd C2 W
Roseville, MN 55113

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