

Sun City Anthem Computer Club



# Bits, PCs & Macs — A Newsletter

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## President's Message

By Warren Begas

President, Sun City Anthem Computer Club

**M**y two years as President of the Computer Club has gone by so rapidly. Here is a several year old picture of the club which serves as a visual reminder of how many changes have taken place in the very recent past. During my tenure as president most of the computers have been updated to Apple iMacs running both Windows 7 and Mac OS X. All the chairs have been replaced with more comfortable chairs with wheels.

Here is a current picture showing the room with its new equipment, new paint colors and pictures on the walls. What you don't see are the other changes behind the scenes.



There is the computer automation of membership renewals, class listings and enrollment, monitor scheduling and house call record keeping.



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Newsletter Layout & Editor:  
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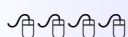
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## Disclaimer

The contents of this newsletter is intended for use by members of the **Sun City Anthem Computer Club** and their immediate families. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and may not be construed to represent an official position of the Computer Club, nor of the Sun City Anthem Community Association, Inc.

Where prices and sources of computer related products are shown within this newsletter, they represent the author's best knowledge of current retail prices and availability. The information is subject to change, and as such, should be used for comparison only.

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 Sun City Anthem  
 Computer Club  
 2450 Hampton Road  
 Henderson, NV 89052  
 E-mail:  
[help@myscacc.com](mailto:help@myscacc.com)  
 Web site URL:  
<http://www.myscacc.com>

## Treasurer's Report.

### SCACC Revenue & Expense Year to: 12/31/11

<b>Inflows</b>	
Dues Collected	\$23,214
Equipment Sales	2,105
House Calls	24,560
Interest income/rebates	<u>916</u>
<b>Total Inflows</b>	<b>\$50,705</b>
<b>Outflows</b>	
Volunteer Recognition	\$22,138
Equipment purchases	25,673
Equipment Repairs	2,795
Volunteer's Breakfast	990
Operating Supplies	10,735
Other Outflows (Sales Tax)	<u>817</u>
<b>Total Outflows</b>	<b><u>\$42,159</u></b>
Excess of inflows over outflows	<b>\$8,546</b>
<b>Assets</b>	
Cash reserves	\$34,000
Checking	<u>4,136</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$38,136</u></b>
Liabilities (Sales tax)	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b><u>\$0</u></b>
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b><u>\$38,136</u></b>

**By Patrick Glazier**  
 Treasurer, SCACC

### President's Message, cont.

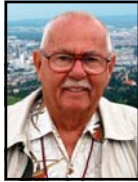
We installed a high definition projector for our presentations and a high quality flatbed scanner for scanning pictures and slides. The computer with the Nikon slide scanner now has 6Gb of memory and a Blu-Ray recorder.

I would like to thank all the people that served on the Board these past two years. They worked hard to bring about all the changes in a very friendly and positive environment. I look forward to serving on the Board in 2012 and continuing to bring improvements to the club.

## Questions and Answers

### By Chuck Davis

Editor, Sun City Anthem  
Computer Club



#### Question: What happened to the Microsoft Installer Cleanup Utility?

**Answer:** Because of several problems with that Utility, Microsoft has withdrawn it from their Websites. However, there are other alternatives offered at this Microsoft site: <http://tinyurl.com/6loaft7>

I have also had considerable success with the Revo Uninstaller. It will definitely remove corrupted installations of various programs allowing successful re-installations if desired.

<http://www.revouninstaller.com/>

#### Question: I can't seem to be able to upgrade my Windows Vista Home Premium to Windows Vista Professional via the Upgrade anytime link. What's going on?

**Answer:** "Windows Anytime Upgrade is no longer available for Windows Vista." The alternative suggested is to upgrade to Windows 7. If you consider this alternative, I strongly urge you to make certain that your current machine can be upgraded. You can

download a Microsoft Upgrade advisor program from: <http://tinyurl.com/ygckjqqq>

#### Question: I have three computers. One uses Window XP, one uses Window Vista and the third uses Windows 7.

**I have a 2 GB USB flash drive that I have been using for the past 3 years to move data from one computer to another as they are not in the same location. I am suddenly receiving the message that I need to format the drive. What can I do?**

**Answer:** Format the drive. If the format can't be done, discard the drive. Flash memory may fail over time. I hope that you have copies of that data on one or more computers as a backup, otherwise the data is lost.

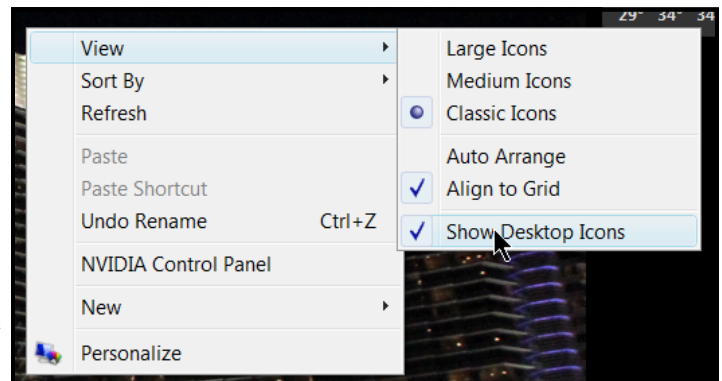
#### Question: Will my QuickBooks 2009 be supported on Apple's Lion?

**Answer:** For the long answer see this article: <http://tinyurl.com/64j6kti>

#### Question: The Icons have all disappeared from the

#### desktop on my Windows Vista computer. How can I get them back?

**Answer:** Right-click on the desktop and choose **View** to open a context menu and then choose **Show Desktop Icons**.



#### Question: Several residents have had their e-mail address hacked and spurious messages sent to all of their contacts. How can this be stopped?

**Answer:** All users of web based e-mail programs should change their passwords on the e-mail account as soon as they read these paragraphs. Web based e-mail programs include, but are not limited to; AOL, Yahoo, Gmail, MSN. At this time, the best one can do when hacked is to change the password on the account. Make it a "strong" password, with a combination of upper and lower case

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## Questions and Answers, cont.

*(Continued from page 3)*

characters and a few numbers and special characters thrown in. Sure it may be difficult to remember, but most computer password cracking routines can get past the usual passwords that people use in seconds.

To check the strength of your intended password, Microsoft has provided a means to check it online in their Safety & Security Center. <http://tinyurl.com/3qdmohy>

**Question: How do you hang up on phone scammers without hurting the caller's feelings?**

**Answer:** Well...Duh!

**Question: I have recently completed building my own computer. It is running Windows 7 and Windows Defender. I have a nagging problem. Why does the Action Center continue to notify that I don't have antivirus protection?**

**Answer:** Windows Defender comes with Windows 7 and is a form of first line of defense against spyware, it is not antivirus software. To protect your computer from viruses, you need to download and install one of the many antivirus programs that are available for

home users. Microsoft Security Essentials is free on genuine Windows software, and provides real-time protections against viruses, some spyware and other unwanted software. <http://tinyurl.com/3ru6315>

**Question: My new computer running Windows 7 doesn't have any of the games that my Windows XP machine had; Solitaire, Free Cell, Minesweeper, etc. Where can I go to download them?**

**Answer:** The games are still distributed on all versions of Windows 7, however on some versions they are turned off by default. To turn them on, click on the **Start** button then choose **Control Panel**, and under **Programs and Features**, click **Turn Windows features on or off**. Now select the **Games** check box, and then click **OK**.

**Question: How can I cause my new Windows 7 laptop computer to allow Windows Backup to run as scheduled, whether the computer is in sleep mode or not?**

**Answer:** Go to **Control Panel**, choose **Power Options**. Then click on **Edit Plan settings**, then click the link **Change advanced power settings**. In the tree

expand **Sleep**, then **Allow wake timers** options. There is two options; **Battery** and **Plugged in**. Both are disabled by default. Choose the **Plugged in** option and set it to **Enabled**. Now your laptop will wake to do its scheduled tasks, including Windows backup. Caution, don't set the battery option as your battery may not last through a backup.

**Question: I am considering buying a new Mac computer. I am running QuickBooks Pro for Windows on my current Windows XP system. Will I be able to install a QuickBooks system on my Mac and convert the company file?**

**Answer:** Yes, but with many reservations, as not all data will convert, such as multi-currency, memorized reports, etc. For a much more complete listing of what you can and cannot convert see: <http://tinyurl.com/28lwm5r> Review the list carefully.

**Question: How can I find the members of the House Call group. I need to find someone to help with my computer's problems?**

**Answer:** You will find a current list on your Club's web

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## Questions and Answers, cont.

(Continued from page 4)

site: <http://www.myscacc.com/> Click on **House Call** in the Navigation bar at left. Search the list for an individual that appears to match the service or problem as you visualize it.

**Question: I just installed Microsoft Office 2010 on my wife's computer. I have a couple of choices, reinstall Office 2003, or find a way to get rid of the "ribbon" feature.**

**Answer:** The latest free Office Compatibility Pack will solve your problems. It can be downloaded here: <http://tinyurl.com/cyqzyl9>

More information About the Compatibility Pack is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/d4teohj>

**Question: How can I change a .docx Microsoft Word document to a .doc?**

**Answer:** It is preferable to download the free Office Compatibility Pack discussed immediately above. Alternatively, you could also download either the free Libre Office: <http://www.libreoffice.org/> or the free Open Office: <http://www.openoffice.org/>

Both will read and write .docx files.

**Question: How do I change my system to show the file extensions, such as: .doc .xls .pdf .exe .jpg and so on?**

**Answer:**

In **Windows 7**, type "Folder Options" in the search box immediately above the Start Orb. Choose Folder Options and continue with the 3rd paragraph below.

In **Windows Vista**, go to the Control panel and click on the Folder Options applet and continue with the 2nd paragraph below.

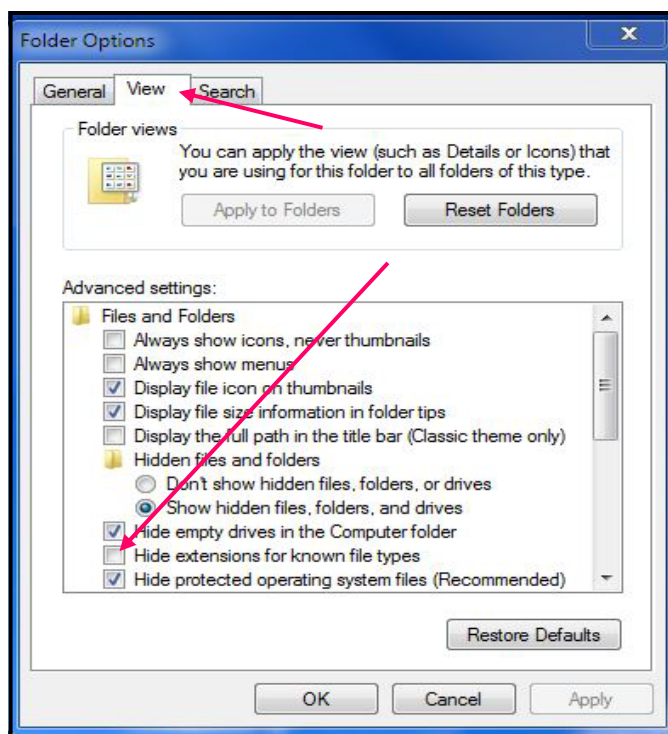
In **Window XP**, go to the Control panel. Choose Folder Options and continue below.

Click on the View tab in the dialog box that opens. Un-

check the box in front of the words: "Hide extensions for known file types." I have never understood why the default is to hide these extensions. Many users have no concept of these extensions because they have never seen them.

**Question: What is a reasonable list of file extensions?**

**Answer:** I believe that the 1,525 extensions listed on this site is fairly complete: <http://tinyurl.com/ln4vbw> You will notice that not all are three characters in length. A Club member's computer next to me has 239 different file extensions.



## New MagicJack Plus Offers Inexpensive Phone Service

### By Ira Wilsker

Author. iwilsker AT sbcglobal.net

WEBSITES:

<http://magicjack.com>

<http://www.freemagicconference.com>

If you watch any TV, you have undoubtedly seen the countless commercials for magicJack, offering to save the users hundreds of dollars a year in phone bills, for a monthly fee of about \$2. When it first came out about three years ago, I reviewed the original magicJack in this column and on my weekly radio show. At that time, magicJack offered some of the least expensive unlimited local and long distance phone service in the country by utilizing the small \$39.95 USB connected original magicJack device, a broadband internet connected computer, and an attached telephone.

MagicJack is very useful in that it offers unlimited local and long distance calling throughout the U.S. and Canada, deeply discounted international calling via pre-paid minutes, free directory assistance, call waiting, voice mail, caller ID, and free international calling when calling the U.S. MagicJack also offers its us-

ers free conference calling; as long as the user creating the conference call is a registered magicJack user, anyone else may participate in the conference call. Creating a "conference call room" is very simple, and instructions are online at <http://www.freemagicconference.com>.

**“....save the users hundreds of dollars a year in phone bills, for a monthly fee of about \$2....”**

According to its website, over eight million of the original magicJack units have been sold. MagicJack uses VoIP (voice over internet protocol) technology to send and receive phone calls over the internet, a technology utilized by several other internet or

"digital" phone services. I used the original USB connected magicJack for about two years, primarily for making long distance calls from home rather than using prime time cell phone minutes. I also took my magicJack and an old telephone with me when traveling such that I would have local and long distance service from hotel rooms, and thus avoid expensive hotel telephone charges, or using limited cell phone minutes. I took my magicJack and phone with me when evacuating from a series of coastal hurricanes, providing me with phone service while away from home. The final use of my original magicJack was in my office so that I could make or return long distance phone calls without incurring long distance charges for my college.

Except for one glitch during a periodic automatic upgrade of the original magicJack software, which led to the loss of my phone-

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## New MagicJack Plus Offers Inexpensive Phone Service.cont.

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book, it always served me well as long as I had a broadband internet connection and my computer was turned on. The requirement that the original magicJack must be connected via USB to a powered and booted computer was its Achilles' heel. While the voice quality was good, and features comprehensive, the original magicJack could only be used if the computer was on, and I always shut down my computer when I was not using it. With the computer off, the original magicJack was also off, resulting in missed calls, or the inability to make calls until the computer was on and booted. Because of this inability to function while the computer was off, I started using a competitor's product, NetTalk Duo, which connected directly to my router, and did not require that it be connected to a powered and booted computer, meaning that it was always functional, as long as I had an internet connection.

Recently, a new magicJack Plus (\$69.99 retail, 30 day trial available) was introduced which maintained all of the features, portability, and services of the original magicJack, including the

first year of service, but now offers the user the choice of being USB connected to a live computer (just like the original product), or being connected directly to a broadband

**“...there is no need for the magicJack Plus to be connected to a computer, as long as the broadband connection is live and the router is powered....”**

router, which will provide an always-on capability. With this router connected option, there is no need for the magicJack Plus to be connected to a computer, as long as the broadband connection is live and the router is powered.

The new magicJack Plus

comes in a package with the simple pictorial connection instructions inside the cover, and registration instructions on the back cover. The device itself is about the same small size as the original device, 1.7"x2.7"x0.7", black in color, with a small blue LED on the front corner which indicates that the device has power, and a green LED by the Ethernet connection, which indicates that a signal is present. On the right side of the device is a standard male USB connector, with the left side having both Ethernet and phone jacks. In the package with the device is a short USB extension cable, Ethernet cable, and a wall plug transformer with a standard USB connection. Connecting the device is simple and intuitive. To originally setup and register the device requires that the device be connected to a powered USB port on the computer (or a fully powered hub); the included USB extension cable can be used to connect the device if port spacing is a problem.

When connected directly to the computer via USB either for the one-time registration process or for computer

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## New MagicJack Plus Offers Inexpensive Phone Service.cont

(Continued from page 7)

based telephone service, the device and its drivers will automatically load unless the security software on the computer blocks external devices from automatically running. If the USB connected magicJack will not automatically load when inserted with the computer booted, the user may either uncheck the security software box that restricts external devices from automatically loading, or may manually run the "autorun.exe" on the magicJack drive, which will download, update, and install the magicJack software on the computer, and start the registration process. If it is desired to run in USB mode whenever the computer is on, the magicJack installation process will insert a file in the computer startup sequence that will automatically load the magicJack software at the next boot.

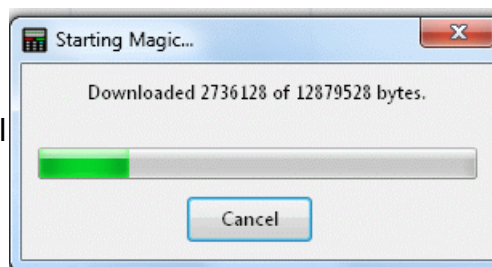
While the actual one-time registration process was simple, it was burdened by a series of about a dozen screens attempting to up sell the user into purchasing additional features and services. One of the first up sell screens offers the user the choice of being assigned a free local phone number by

choosing a state, area code and city, or for a \$10 fee the user could create a vanity phone number using any combination of available numbers and letters, or the user can select a Canadian phone number. While not displayed at this time during

**"...Turbo Boost" which automates the performance improvement process based on the intended uses of the computer,..."**

the registration process, magicJack does offer the ability to transfer an existing phone number to the

magicJack service. Another choice was the \$3 fee for selecting your own "last four digits" of your assigned phone prefix. One problem became apparent for our local 409 area code; all of the phone numbers listed for 409 were for Galveston; there were no local numbers for the Golden Triangle area of Texas. Another screen offers an optional "this one time only" no-fault comprehensive warranty on the device itself for \$1 per year instead of the normal \$10 per year. The next screen offers the "5 Year Platinum Service Plan" which adds another 5 years of service, plus a 5 year extended warranty on the device, for a one-time charge of \$99.95. A following screen offers a second year of service and a one year warranty extension for \$29.95. Still another screen offered the user the option of buying additional devices for \$69.95, with free rush shipping. Not yet done selling additional services, subsequent registration screens offer deeply discounted prepaid international calling, and a \$20 lifetime warranty. Once these up sell screens completed their sales pitch, the user enters an activation code emailed by magicJack dur-



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## New MagicJack Plus Offers Inexpensive Phone Service.cont

*(Continued from page 8)*

ing the registration process; the user is then shown his magicJack phone number; given the opportunity (twice) to automatically email friends and family the new phone number; and then choose the desired connection method, USB or Ethernet. The registration process is now completed, and the user may now make and receive unlimited calls using the magicJack.

Once registered and activated, the magicJack Plus can be used in USB mode by plugging any standard phone into the phone jack on the device; the power is provided by the USB port (note that this will not work on USB hubs that are not fully powered; many USB hubs do not provide full electrical power to attached devices). The device is now fully functional, and calls may be made using the dial on the phone or by dialing using the magicJack phone book on the desktop.

Alternatively, once registered and activated, the magicJack may be connected directly to the router using the included Ethernet cable, and powered by connecting the device directly to the wall-plug transformer or by using the included USB extension cable to the

wall-plug power supply. Utilizing this method, which is my personal preference, is what provides the always-on functionality without the necessity of a powered computer. For those with a simple cable or DSL modem that does not include an extra Ethernet port, the big

**“...For those with broadband internet, the new magicJack Plus may be an effective alternative to high local and long distance phone bills....”**

box office supply and electronics stores, as well as the discount stores, have a "network switch", which is a simple box (about \$15) that provides additional Ethernet ports to the cable or DSL modem, and functions as a router.

I found the new magicJack

Plus to be feature rich and reasonably priced for the amount of services provided, with very good voice quality. I like the portability and small size of the device, as well as the option to use it with a direct connection to the router, negating the necessity for a powered computer. On an annual basis, having unlimited local and long distance calling, directory assistance, caller ID, voice mail, 911 service, and conference calling for about \$2.50 per month is a money saving bargain. I also found that the new magicJack Plus does work fine with my home fax machine. Using the magicJack connected to my router, I have not encountered any functional problems with it; the only negative issue is not having a local Golden Triangle phone number. Other than the several marketing screens displayed during the one-time registration process, the magicJack Plus was very fast and easy to install, configure, and setup. For those with broadband internet, the new magicJack Plus may be an effective alternative to high local and long distance phone bills.

