PRODUCT REVIEW

PDF File Editor – Plus!   *by Alan German*

Recently, I had to add information to a PDF form for which no data fields could be modified with my usual PDF viewer (PDF-XChange Viewer). As an alternative, I decided to investigate the possibility of using a PDF editor. Fortuitously, that same day, I came across a positive review of Sejda PDF Editor on PC World's web site. This software package is both free and open-source, albeit with some significant restrictions on its use. My first thought was that the major limitation for the free version, in that it only allows three tasks per day to be performed, might be a problem. Nevertheless, since my requirements were both specific and very limited, I decided to give the package a try.

There are actually two free versions of the software; a web-based editor and a downloadable desktop version. I chose to download and install the desktop version in order to be able to run the program locally on files stored on my computer's hard drive.

Using the program at a very basic level is intuitive – open a file, scroll, down to a data field, click the mouse, and type over the *Type your text* legend that pops up. There are a number of options to modify the appearance of the text, e.g. font and size, to try to mimic any existing text entries. This capability may be limited by the fonts that are available, but sizing shouldn't be an issue since this can be incremented in tenths of a point. Note also that one of the options is a trash can that may be used to delete any given item.

The menu bar also provides options to further modify the document with the ability to add images, hyperlinks, form elements, signatures, and shapes (ellipse or rectangle). The whiteout tab allows a rectangular box to be ascribed to an area of the page which then hides (rather than removes) the underlying content. The annotate tab provides tools to strikeout, highlight and underline text using one of several available colours, and to draw freehand directly on the page.

In the following screenshot, note that a DRAFT "stamp" has been added; a line of text has been struck out in red; and a signature, using a pre-defined image file, is being resized and located in the appropriate box.

Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, October 12th, 2022

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

General Computer Hardware
Speakers: Paul and Maria Middleveen, The Trailing Edge computer store

6 Bexley Place, Unit 101
Ottawa, ON, K2H 8W2
Telephone: 613-860-2001 x200
Email: **paul@tte.ca**
Website: **www.tte.ca**

Paul and Maria can answer the following questions:

1. What's the difference between I3, I5, I7 processors?
2. What's RAM and do I need the most possible?
3. What's the difference between a hard drive and a solid-state drive?
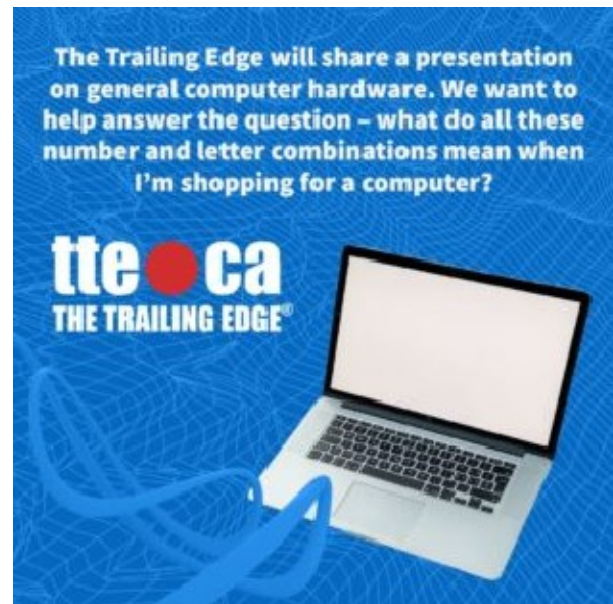4. What do I need in a video card?
5. Do I need all these ports?

This meeting will be via Zoom video conference.

Join us at **https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting**.
The Zoom link will be live at 7:15 pm. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm.

The above link includes the meeting ID and password. However, if you are prompted for the information, use:

Meeting ID: **924 9556 0898**
Password: **opcug**

The Trailing Edge will share a presentation on general computer hardware. We want to help answer the question – what do all these number and letter combinations mean when I'm shopping for a computer?

tte●ca
THE TRAILING EDGE®

Coming Up…

September 28
Weekly Q&A Session

October 5
Weekly Q&A Session

November 9
WINDOWS 11: IT'S HERE TO STAY
Speaker: Lawrence Patterson, OPCUG

December 14
Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) Overview
Speaker: Stéphane Richard

All scheduled regular monthly meetings, weekly Q&A sessions, and a link to OPCUG presentations at the OPL are posted on our website at https://opcug.ca/#upcoming. All events are via video conference until further notice.

| **2022 CALENDAR**		
Meetings	**Date**	**Time and Venue**
Regular Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, October 12th	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: **https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting** To see all scheduled events, visit https://opcug.ca/#upcoming
Next Q&A Session	Wednesday, September 28th	Until further notice, Q&A sessions are no longer held after regular monthly meetings. Join us on all other Wednesdays for weekly Q&A.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, October 12th	Enjoy a cold brew or other beverage in the comfort of your home during the video conference.

Cleaning up your disk   *by Chris Taylor*

Disk space seems to disappear over time. If you have hundreds of gigabytes or even terabytes of free space, this may not seem to be a problem, but there are some things to keep in mind that may make it worth some effort to keep things svelte.

First, if your boot partition (where Windows is installed—normally C:) is on a solid-state drive, it might be relatively small. If that's the case, you might run out of available space fairly quickly. At an absolute minimum, you want to ensure you have enough space to install yearly Windows *feature updates*, which can take 11 GB or more on the boot partition during the update process. You also want room to install future applications. As well, many computers are configured to store user data on the boot partition. That could include hundreds of gigabytes of documents, photos, videos, music, etc.

Second, since an image backup contains a copy of everything on the disk—operating system, programs, and data, your backups will take longer to complete and take more space on your backup drive than necessary if you have a lot of clutter. What? You don't do image backups of your computer? Stop right now and read *A Comprehensive Backup Plan* co-authored by Alan German and myself in the June 2017 issue of the newsletter - https://opcug.ca/Articles/1706.pdf.

There are pretty effective tools built into Windows for keeping your disk clean and tidy. The main tool is Storage Sense. Hold down the Windows key and press **i** to open *Settings.* Click on the icon for *System*.
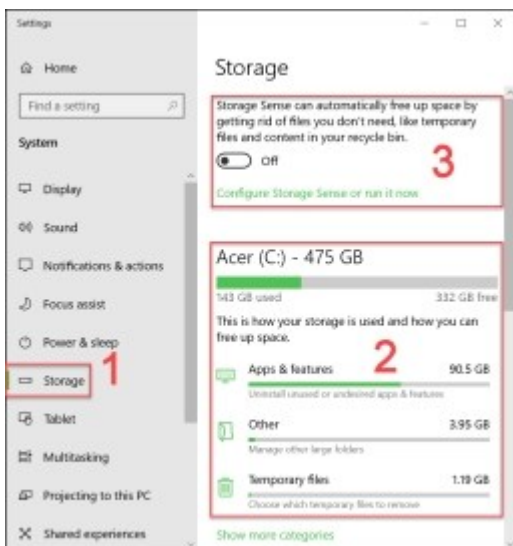
Click on *Storage* in the left panel (1 in the screenshot).

Section 2 in the screenshot shows major categories of files. You can click on any of them to get more information and manually get rid of stuff you don't need. Manual cleanup is sometimes the only way to deal with clutter. Windows can't—for instance—decide what documents or programs you don't need.

Click the link *Configure Storage Sense or run it now* (in section 3 in the screenshot)

Storage Sense can clean up three things (section 4 in the screenshot): temporary files not currently being used by programs; files that have been in the recycle bin longer than a specified period; and files that have been in your Downloads folder longer than a specific period. All three of these areas tend to collect a lot of files over time.

Pick a timeframe for files in the recycle bin and Downloads folder. If you don't want Storage Sense to remove any files, set the timeframe to *Never*.

Run Storage Sense by clicking the *Clean now* button (5 in the screenshot)

You can automate the running of Storage Sense with the slider (section 6 in the screenshot). When you toggle it on, you can choose when Storage Sense runs (7 in the screenshot): every day/week/month or when disk space is low.

Cleaning up your disk *(continued from previous page)*

Microsoft says, "Low free disk space will vary depending on disk size and minimum operational thresholds. You're in a low disk state when the capacity bar in Start > Settings > System > Storage turns red."

There is another major cleanup that can be done—Windows Update. Whenever Windows Update runs, it squirrels away previous versions of updated files in case want to uninstall a problematic update. These old versions of files can take up giga-bytes of disk space. If my computer is not experiencing any new problems a week after *Patch Tuesday* (the second Tuesday of the month), I seriously doubt I will need to roll back an update and these older versions of files are just useless clutter. Mi-crosoft provides another tool that can remove these—Disk Cleanup. Click the Start button and type *Disk Cleanup*. Click on *Disk Cleanup* in the results.
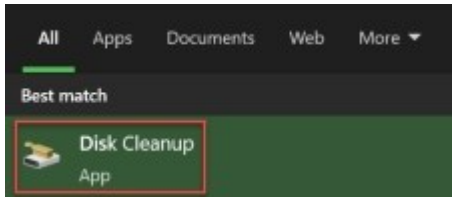
When Disk Cleanup loads, immediately click the *Clean up system files* button. Disk Cleanup will reload with additional options, including *Windows Update Clean-up*. As you can see in the screenshot, it can free up a lot of disk space—6.5 GB on this particular computer. A warning: choosing *Windows Update Clean-up* can take a long time to complete. I have seen it take over half an hour. That's because it is do-ing more than deleting old Windows Update files and these additional actions can help free up disk space. First, it does the equivalent of *dism /Online /Cleanup-Image /StartComponentCleanup*. This looks at the component store (C:\Windows\WinSxS folder) for components that are no longer being referenced and deletes them. This is normally done automatically as a schedule maintenance task; Windows Update Clean-up forces it to run immediately. It also looks for oper-ating system files that can benefit from being compressed and compresses them.
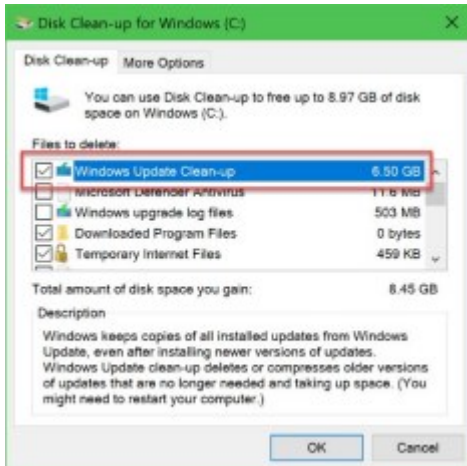
There are additional categories that Disk Cleanup can deal with. Select any of them and the *Description* field will give you more information about the particular option, which should help you decide whether or not you want Disk Cleanup to remove those files.

The combination of Storage Sense and Disk Cleanup will give you a fighting chance at keeping unnecessary clutter under control.

♦♦♦

Quick Tip 47: Closing programs
by Chris Taylor

At the February 23rd Q&A, I showed 5 ways to close running programs politely and one way to do so decidedly impolitely. Whenever possible, close programs politely!

Here are two additional polite ways. Both are done from the Alt-Tab menu normally used to move between open programs.

How the Alt-Tab menu works

Hold down the Alt key and tap the Tab key to cycle through your active pro-grams. As you repeatedly tap the Tab key, a highlight box appears around each program in turn. When the program you want to use has the white box around it, release the Alt key and the focus shifts to that program. If you have a lot of open windows and blow past the program you want, keep holding the Alt key, press and hold the Shift key and tap the Tab key to reverse the scrolling order. Hit the Esc key to exit Alt-Tab without changing which program has the focus.

Closing programs from Alt-Tab

There are two methods to close programs from Alt-Tab. The first is to move your mouse over the Alt-Tab window. As you move over program windows, an X ap-pears in the top-right corner. Hover the mouse over the X and it will turn red. Click it and the program will close.

The other way is to tap the tab key until the white box is highlighting the window you want to close and tap the Delete key.
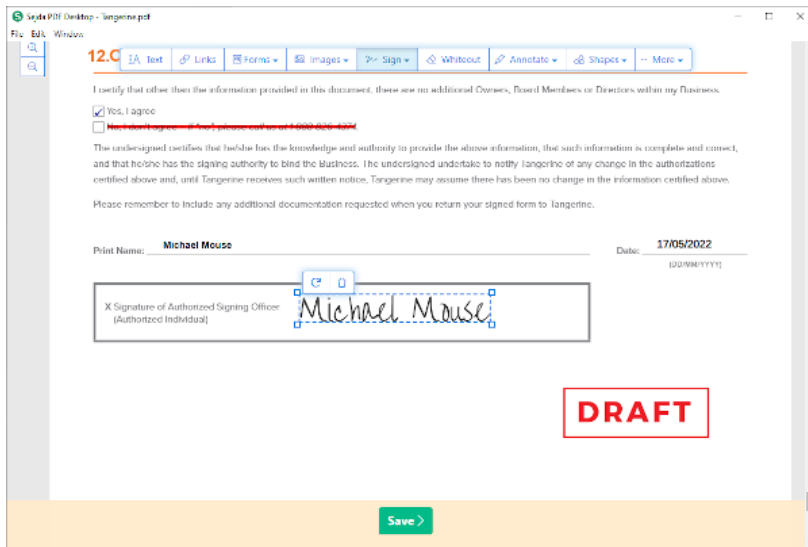
PSA: online licence plate re-newals & digital reminders

Remember that you are still required to renew your vehicle registrations, even though there is no fee and no stick-er required on your plate. This can be done on-line or at a Service Ontario loca-tion. Plate expiry typically falls on the owner's birthday, and tickets are now being issued to drivers caught with an expired registration. If you would like to receive emails, texts or phone calls 60 and 30 days before an expiry, Service Ontario now has a digital reminder ser-vice that's available to you.

https://www.ontario.ca/page/renew-your-licence-plate

https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-serviceontario-digital-reminders

PDF File Editor... *(continued from page 1)*

While I didn't encounter any limitation in multiple edits on my document, I suspect that editing is counted as one task, and is one of the three tasks that are available on any given day when using the free version of the software. The other limitations of the free version are: document size must be less than 50 MB and 200 pages; files up to 100 MB may be compressed; OCR is limited to 10 pages and image size to 5 MB; up to 30 files and 50 pages may be combined; and files must be converted one by one.

In addition to the editor, the program has many more features, which are likely counted as separate tasks, including merge, split, compress, convert (e.g. PDF to Word), security settings (e.g. protect, watermark), delete pages, extract images, and Bates Numbering (who knew such a thing existed?)

For anyone needing to edit or annotate a PDF document, subject to the above-noted limitations, Sejda PDF Editor may well provide the necessary tools. In any case, the program is free, easy to use, and includes many powerful features. So, go ahead, give it a try!

Bottom Line:

Sejda PDF Desktop (Freeware)
Version 7.4.1
Sejda BV
https://www.sejda.com

Nominations for OPCUG Board for 2023

Once a year, the OPCUG holds elections for the 9-member Board of Directors. We are once again coming up to this annual event.

We encourage all members to consider running for a board position or getting involved in some other manner in the operations of the OPCUG.

If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to me or any current or past Board member. Names are listed on the back page of this newsletter and on the web site at https://opcug.ca/executives/.

Nominations can be submitted by sending an email to nominations@opcug.ca .

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2022.

Please get involved. Please help the OPCUG continue in its role of *Users helping users* !

Bob Herres
Election Chair, 2023

THROUGH THE LENS

A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts. After the click of your camera, you're only half done!

Evening photography

by Lynda Buske

There are three ways that I take evening photographs:

1. For a serious shoot, since light levels are low, being on a tripod allows me to use longer shutter speeds than I would if the camera was hand-held.

2. I hand hold a camera but adjust for a faster speed (see below)

3. I use my cell phone which is well suited to evening photography because it can give a faster shutter speed in low light situations than a traditional camera. I always have it with me so I can grab shots of a city street, festive lights, etc.

The key to evening photography is to force your camera to underexpose from what it calculates, resulting in a more realistic dominance of darker tones. The camera normally tries to average all tonalities to a middle-brightness, which is too bright for a realistic evening photo. As well, a brighter exposure can wash out colours that you want to capture like the reds and oranges of a sunset.

There are various ways you can avoid this phenomenon. Most cameras (even pocket size) have an EV (exposure value) button you can adjust before shooting to lighten or darken the resulting photo. It usually will have +/- indicator.

This button allows you to over- or under- expose an image differently from what the camera thinks is the correct exposure. Fully automatic mode does not permit you to adjust the EV, so set the camera to *P, A, S (or Tv),* or fully manual mode. See your manual for details. For an evening image, set the EV to the negative side of the scale resulting in a darker photo. Cell phones usually have an adjustment as well but the location and method of use will vary depending on the make and model.

Some cameras have a night time "scene mode" that can be used as well. It basically has been programmed to create an optimal image in a low light situation without making it look like daytime. A cell phone might have *Night Sight* which uses computational photography techniques to combine multiple short exposures into a single, properly-exposed image without camera motion. Some also have a night time portrait mode so faces are exposed more than the dark background. This avoids the situation of a beautiful sunset with silhouetted people if indeed you do want to see their faces clearly.

Another method of capturing an evening pic is to let the camera automatically choose the speed and aperture, then switch to manual mode and underexpose by reducing the shutter speed, aperture, or lowering the ISO, creating a darker image. Keep in mind that there are other effects caused by changing parameters: with a longer shutter speed, you may end up with blurred portions of your image caused by objects within the frame moving during the exposure, and a smaller aperture will cause a longer depth of field. This creates a darker image.Failing these methods, if there is still some light in the sky, point your camera to that area, press the shutter halfway which locks the exposure based on this brighter area. Then recompose the image to what you want to capture and press the shutter the rest of the way to take the shot. Keep in mind that half-pressing the shutter also locks the focus.

If despite these efforts, your camera requires a longer speed than you can manage to hold steadily without a tripod, you can bump the ISO to a higher number and increase your shutter speed. The tradeoff however, may be increased graininess (or noise) in your photo. This can be removed later with most photo editing software packages (free Photoscape X, Lightroom, ON1 Photo Raw, etc.), however, not with Windows Photos.

For fireworks, if you want a frozen image, the above instructions will work well. If you want to try a long exposure to get the trails of light, you will need a tripod and a speed of perhaps two seconds or more depending on the desired effect.

BLAST FROM THE PAST — 1994

This month's blast from the past is from January 1994 when The PUB expanded its dial-up capabilities (ah, the good ol' dial-up days). Visit our History web pages for more trips down memory lane. See the next page for a PUB retrospective and club milestones in 1994.

The PUB

What's new at The PUB

by Chris Taylor

If you've visited The PUB recently, you may have noticed some renovations designed to make it easier for you to get on and get the files you want.

Six lines, one number

By the time you read this we will have expanded to 6 lines, all with high speed (v.32bis, 14.4 kbps) modems. All modems now have the same capabilities and since all lines are in a hunt group, you can maximize your chances of getting on by using only the main number (228-0665). Set your communications parameters to 8 data bits, one stop bit, no parity. Set your speed to the highest speed supported by your modem. Note that if you have a v.32bis modem, you should set your speed to 38,400 to get maximum throughput.

Downloads now unaffected by time limit

Another recent change at The PUB deals with time limits. While all users get 60 minutes per day access, there are a growing number of files that cannot be downloaded in 60 minutes at 1200bps or even at 2400bps. We even have a file that would be tight at 14.4 kbpsa Windows NT patch file over 6 Mb!

As a result, the configuration on The PUB now doesn't check to see if you have enough time left before starting a file transfer. And once the bulletin board software (TBBS) starts a file transfer, it lets you finish it. If you are downloading multiple files using a batch protocol such as ZMODEM, your time is checked between each file. Once you run out of time, you will be logged off automatically.

One problem can arise from this new configuration. Each day at 4:00 a.m., The PUB shuts down automatically to do about 2-minutes worth of maintenance. If someone is downloading a file at this time, all free lines are shut down and then TBBS waits for the file transfer to finish. After the file transfer is done, TBBS shuts down the board, does it's maintenance tasks and then brings the board back up. The result is that anyone who starts a download that goes past 4:00 a.m. causes all other lines to be unavailable for as long as it takes past 4:00 a.m. for the download to complete.

If you do late night downloads, please be sure to verify that your download will not go past 4:00 a.m. Short of going back to checking time limits before starting downloads, there is currently no way around this problem.

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The PUB in review

by Chris Taylor

The year was a busy one for The PUB. We had 48,979 calls, 7,725 messages posted, and 57,098 downloads during the year. And 21 programs or information files were downloaded more than 100 times during 1993.

The top ten downloads for the year were:

- PKZIP 204C and 204G (859)
- ALLFILES.ZIP (725)
- RECENT.ZIP (539)
- BBS listings (387)
- PUB30NFO.ZIP (207)
- Visual Basic 2.0 runtime (183)
- LHA213.EXE (177)
- Solar Winds (173)
- DOS 6.2 StepUp (149)
- ELVIRAB4.GIF (145).

With the expansion to 6 lines (all high speed) I expect 1994 will be even busier! My thanks to everyone who visited The PUB. And an especially warm thanks to those who contributed by uploading files and participating in the message areas.

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HISTORY

Retrospective: What's new at The PUB *by Bob Walker*

In the January 1994 issue of the OPCUG Newsletter (Volume 11, No. 1), there was an article by Chris Taylor titled 'What's new at The PUB'. Chris told us of some of the latest improvements to OPCUG's dialup Bulletin Board System (BBS).

One of the big improvements was how a sixth phone line had been added so you were less likely to get a busy signal when trying to connect. And the maximum speed had been bumped up to 38,400 baud (roughly 38,400 bits per second), IF you had one of the latest hot modems, and IF you managed to get all the settings right. The one-hour daily time limit had been changed, so if you were in the middle of a 'big' download (one of the biggest files was a huge 6 Mb) when your hour was up, the download wouldn't finish before you were cut off. It's hard to imagine these limitations when we're used to download speeds of more than 10Mbs per second and movie files of 50Gb or more. We've gone from Model T's to semiautonomous cars in less than 20 years.

The real story may be in the adjoining article 'The PUB in review', also by Chris. He gives the annual statistics of Pub activity for 1993, including that there were over 57,000 downloads and what the top ten files were. Until the Internet came on the scene and became popular, small BBS's like the Pub, or commercial services like CompuServe, America Online or Prodigy were the main (or only) places most of us could download software and other files. Things have certainly changed.

You can read or download both articles at https://opcug.ca/Articles/9401.pdf .

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Club History - 1994 *(taken from https://opcug.ca/history/)*

Oct 1994 Committee created to review the constitution: Stan McRoberts, Tony Frith, Chris Taylor, Harald Freise.

The club participates in the Ontario Computer Fair.

Sep 1994 First request to provide Internet access, which was turned down due to cost.

The club has 919 members, the highest ever (?).

The BOD decides to improve the name of the club from OPCUG to PCGO (Personal Computer Group of Ottawa), and then to GOPCUG (Greater Ottawa PC Users' Group). Votes of the membership at the next Annual General Meeting (Jan 95) overturned that action taken by the BOD, and so restored the name to the original OPCUG.

Start of the process to get incorporated and to revise the constitution.

Apr 1994 The club participates in the Ontario Computer Fair.

Feb 1994 Microsoft stops providing a free help line to club members.

Jan 1994 The PUB gets two more phone lines for a total of 6 lines to help with the load. An auction is held for the two old 2400-baud modems.

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

To receive the monthly newsletter by email, send an email to:
opcug-newsletter+subscribe@googlegroups.com (leave subject and body fields blank)
You do **not** need to create a Gmail or Google Groups account.

To subscribe to other OPCUG Google Groups member services, go to:
https://opcug.ca/google-groups-how-to/

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free at the church. OCTranspo bus #90 stops nearby. Details at https://opcug.ca/venue/.
(NOTE: Due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, all our events are via video conference until further notice. Details at https://opcug.ca/venue/)

Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. followed by a Q&A Session until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees:	$20 per year
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Follow us on Twitter:	**https://www.twitter.com/opcug**

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Director w/o Portfolio
    Karen Wallace-Graner   **karenwg@opcug.ca**

Q&A HAS GONE ON-LINE! WEEKLY!

Because of the pandemic, the OPCUG is holding weekly Q&A sessions in Zoom video-conferences.

Join us every Wednesday (except on regular monthly meeting nights) at 7:30 pm to discuss computer issues. Questions (and answers) on any computer-related issue are welcome. Or, do you have a favourite computer program or topic that you would like to share with the group? Send your questions, answers, or the details of what you would like to share to: SuggestionBox@opcug.ca

Everyone is welcome to attend Q&A sessions and to ask questions about their specific computer-related problems. Join us at: https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting (if you use the Zoom client, the meeting ID is **924 9556 0898** and the password is **opcug**).